

# THE GREATER AMERICA

by  
RALPH D. PAINE





Class F 595

Book P 14

Copyright N<sup>o</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

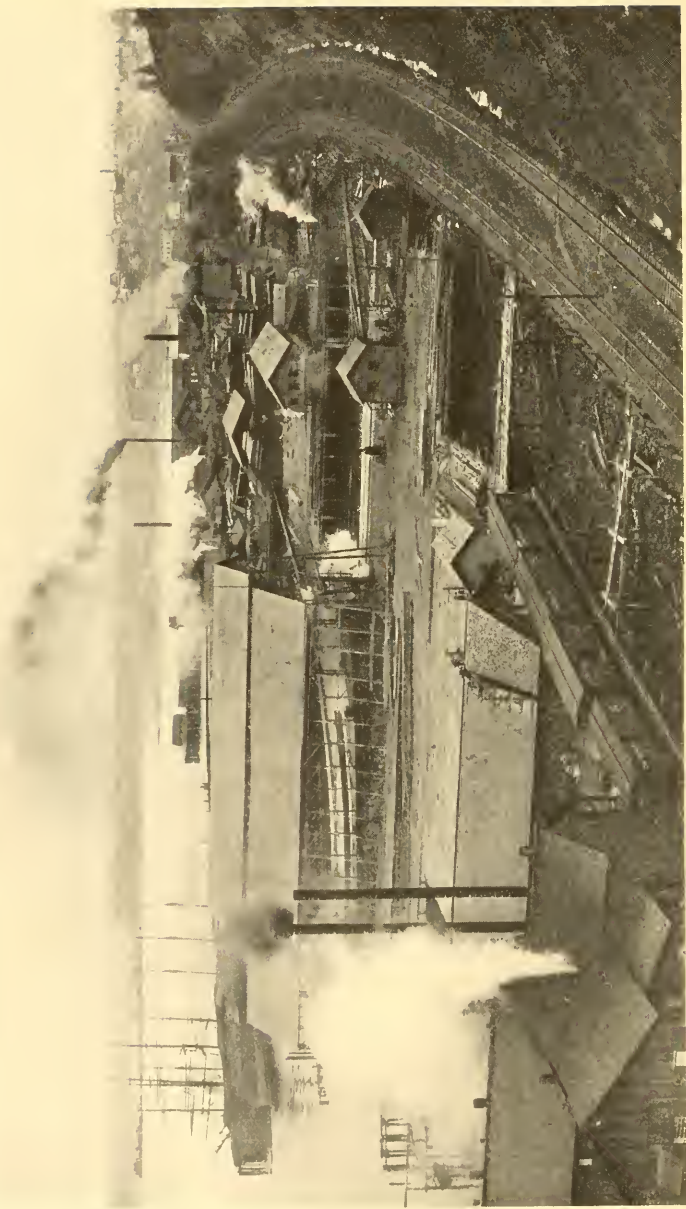
COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.











*On Puget Sound, where commerce seeks the Orient*

# The Greater America

by

Ralph D. Paine

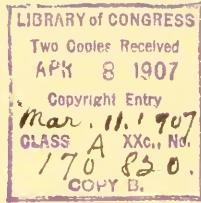
*Author of "The Story of Martin Coe,"  
"The Praying Skipper," etc.*



NEW YORK

The Outing Publishing Company

MCMVII



Copyright, 1906 and 1907, by  
THE OUTING PUBLISHING COMPANY

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, Eng.

*All rights reserved.*

THE OUTING PRESS,  
DEPOSIT, N. Y.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE CALL OF THE INLAND SEA . . .	1
II PAST AND PRESENT AT THE "SOO" . .	14
III THE STORY OF A COPPER MINE . . .	32
IV THE CONFUSION OF A PROPHET . . .	54
V THE PEOPLING OF THE PRAIRIE . . .	63
VI THE MAGNET OF THE WHEAT . . .	80
VII "JIM" HILL AND THE RECONSTRUCTED FARMER . . . . .	94
VIII THE LAST OF THE OPEN RANGE . . .	104
IX JACK TEAL AND SOME OTHERS . . .	117
X THE LOST CHARLEY KEYES MINE . . .	135
XI THE COW PUNCHER VERSUS IRRIGATION .	152
XII THE HEART OF THE BIG TIMBER COUNTRY	158
XIII THE MAN WHO FOUND HIMSELF . . .	178
XIV A BREATH FROM ALASKA . . . .	192
XV ALONG PACIFIC WATER-FRONTS . . .	204



---

## *Contents*

---

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVI ON THE PILOT SCHOONER'S DECK . .	215
XVII TWENTIETH CENTURY ARGONAUTS . .	229
XVIII WHERE RANCH AND CITY MEET . .	244
XIX GOLD CAMPS OF THE DESERT . .	263
XX ON THE ROAD TO BULLFROG . .	256
XXI THE MEN OF THE UNTAMED DESERT .	298
XXII IN CONCLUSION . . . . .	321

## ILLUSTRATIONS

On Puget Sound, where commerce seeks the Orient	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
The vanishing lake carrier of other days . . . . .	4 ✓
The modern freighter; a steel trough with a lid on it . . . . .	4
The old way of handling cargo . . . . .	12 ✓
Where steam has succeeded brawn . . . . .	12
The Soo—the mightiest link between the East and West . . . . .	20 ✓
Where copper is king . . . . .	32
The toilers of the copper country . . . . .	42
The railroad's difficulties in winter . . . . .	50
This piece of country has surely been torn to a frazzle . . . . .	56
Scooping up the rich ore from the earth's surface . . . . .	62
The railroad was marching * * * two miles a day . . . . .	66 ✓
A prairie water wagon . . . . .	74
The water-witcher at work . . . . .	74
The low sod house of the homesteader . . . . .	82
Sprouting buildings from the prairie grow with incon- ceivable rapidity . . . . .	82
The bank is one of the earliest buildings in the town . . . . .	90 ✓
The magnet of the wheat . . . . .	94
Blue ribbon live stock—prairie bred . . . . .	100 ✓

---

## *Illustrations*

---

	FACING PAGE
A Montana round-up of twenty-five years ago . . . . .	108
Picked survivors of the lost legion . . . . .	114
A Montana sheep ranch . . . . .	118
The round-up camp . . . . .	128
A freighter's outfit . . . . .	136
The first time in harness . . . . .	146
The new king of the cattle range . . . . .	152
Pioneer irrigation . . . . .	156
"The 'donkey' * * * was yanking it home hand over fist" . . . . .	166
"Huge logs loomed amid this woodland wreckage" . . . . .	176
The home of the sheep herder . . . . .	186
One of the last of a noble race . . . . .	208
The pilot boat at sea . . . . .	218
Returning from a visit to the light-ship . . . . .	226
A Pacific barkentine in tow . . . . .	226
The liner homeward bound from China . . . . .	226
The shack of the Forty-niner . . . . .	234
A monster that makes hash of the landscape . . . . .	234
A corner of Santa Anita ranch . . . . .	244
"Lucky" Baldwin's thoroughbreds at pasture . . . . .	250
In the Mexican quarter of Santa Anita . . . . .	256
A Mexican sheep herder and his flock . . . . .	260
In the heart of a gold camp . . . . .	266

---

## *Illustrations*

---

	FACING PAGE
A residence section of Tonopah . . . . .	272 ✓
The main street of Goldfield . . . . .	278 ✓
Hauling ore from a mine of fabulous richness . . . . .	284 ✓
A chauffeur of the desert and his car . . . . .	288 ✓
A desert pass on the Goldfield road . . . . .	294 ✓
Moving-day in the desert . . . . .	300
The stage station " thirty miles from nowhere " . . . . .	306
The desert freighter ten days out from port . . . . .	310 ✓
Freighters watering at an oasis . . . . .	318
Prospectors in the heart of the hostile desert . . . . .	324 ✓





## INTRODUCTION

THIS book is a record of impressions of a western journey undertaken for the purpose of getting out among some of the millions of good Americans who are doing their day's work as they find it, with a cheerful faith in themselves and an abounding confidence in the future of their country. This product of my note-books contains nothing that is startlingly new, nor does it pretend to be more than a series of glimpses of the splendid activities of the American West of to-day. I hope, however, that I have been able to catch, here and there, the spirit of that creative energy which has wrought such a marvelous transformation within the span of a single lifetime, and of the dauntless vigor and enterprise which have not yet lost the bold and picturesque flavor that is essentially and typically American.

I know an old town on the Kennebec, in the "State o' Maine," which holds, embalmed in fragrant traditions, the life and memories of bygone generations that played a noble part in the early building of the nation. Beside the river winds the main street, beneath whose majestic elms are rows of white houses with green blinds, not one of which was built less than a century ago. Along the valley beyond the town are weather-worn farmhouses with

---

## *Introduction*

---

shambling barns, some of them deserted. They nestle in rock-ribbed valleys or climb the slopes of wind-swept hills, and their boundaries are marked by low stone walls built with vast toil. Few young men are left on the little farms along the valley. The fathers are always working from dawn to dark, and when the year ends it shows a scanty livelihood in net results, with not much more cash in hand than will pay taxes. The mothers achieve miracles of household economy, yet the struggle to make both ends meet wears them down before their time.

Living conditions in such communities as this have suffered surprisingly few changes during the last hundred years. A sprinkling of retired gentlefolk, a few merchants whose stores supply the town and valley, and the scattered farming community around about, comprise a population whose daily round of interest largely mirrors those of the days of spinning wheels and stage-coaches. For they are still dependent upon the soil, which has become stale and weary with much tilling, and whose small yield no longer gives adequate returns for the sweat that it costs.

It was such towns as this that sent their best blood onward and westward to carry on the work they had begun. In the village graveyard sleep those men and women who tamed the New England wilderness, and on the slabs you may read hundreds of names, all of Americans of the pioneer stock; names which to-day are scattered as far as the Pacific Coast, and

---

## *Introduction*

---

which still stand for the qualities of manhood and Americanism that have peopled the prairie, the mountain, the desert and the forest.

The old home towns of these pioneers and the churchyard in which they sleep recall the building of a nation in its heroic beginning. Their work is done, their towns are little more than memorials of what they did, and the spirit that animated them has vanished from them, but only to inspire newer generations of kindred breed to far greater work of the same kind.

It is true, also, in lesser degree, that in all the other country along the Atlantic seaboard the pioneering and peopling were long ago accomplished. Even the cities of the East find scope for progress chiefly in rebuilding upon the foundations laid by others. Their people have become the consumers of the resources of the country to the westward, where the great creative and pioneering forces are still active in the fresh joy of wresting from the mine, the farm, the ranch, the range and the sea their hitherto ungarnered riches.



# THE GREATER AMERICA

## CHAPTER I

### THE CALL OF THE INLAND SEAS

ON the Great Lakes there are no fleets of tall-sided square-riggers waiting for cargoes, no rusty tramps in port a month before loafing off across the Seven Seas. The traditions of the sea have been flung aside. The lines of the vessels of the Atlantic are the result of centuries of battling with all weathers, and even the sorriest and most unlovely tramp has something in her aspect to suggest the noble race of deep-water ships from which she sprang. The salty harbors are still rich with the romance of the ages, and alive with the spirit of adventure and of mystery.

The voice of the sea sings, "Far Away, Far Away," but the cry of the Great Lakes is, "Hurry, Oh, Hurry Faster." If the "liner is a lady," the cargo boats of the lakes are husky, sweating men with their sleeves rolled up, ever in furious toil with merciless taskmasters driving them. To be filled to the hatches with ore or grain or lumber, to reach their destination, unload and hasten back for another cargo, this is their business, and for this they are built.



---

## *The Greater America*

---

Along the waterfront of Buffalo I found no forests of graceful yards and spars, nor the towering bulk of the liners and freighters which overtop the warehouses of the New York docks. Clustered along the elevators and ore docks I saw the long, low lake carriers, in tonnage surpassing most of the ocean steamers. What they looked like was from four to six hundred feet of steel trough with a lid on; at one end a wheel-house, at the other a smokestack and a row of cabins, and between them a clear stretch of deck as long as a city block. This is the steamer of the Great Lakes, a triumph of American utility and adaptability, which can handle more cargo in less time than any other transportation device ever made.

There was a salt-water captain, who, for reasons of his own, accepted a berth as first mate in a big passenger steamer on the Great Lakes. He was a capable seafaring man, but he did not know what "hustle" meant until he went aboard at Buffalo. The lake skipper to whom he reported for duty remarked in the most casual manner:

"Just give her a coat of paint this morning, and if the sun stays hot and she dries in good shape, give her a second coat this afternoon."

The salt-water mate staggered in his tracks and made amazed protest. This was a five-thousand-ton vessel, and giving her two coats of paint was several days' work, by his reckoning. The lake skipper was a person of discernment, wherefore he had pity on

---

## *The Call of the Inland Seas*

---

his new mate and forebore to deal harshly with him, explaining, with a tolerant grin:

"All right. I suppose you'll have to learn to move more lively after snoozing around salt water all your life. You just pass that order along to the bos'n and tell him it's got to be done and then you sit up and take notice."

The bos'n took the order calmly, as if it were in the day's work, and by nightfall the big steamer was spick and span with two coats of paint from her water line to her guard rail. The sailor from deep water had learned his first lesson in the ways of the Great Lakes during the navigation season, when the hard-driven shipping must be forced to do twelve months' work in half a year.

Through the open season the most imposing processions of merchant craft in the world stream up and down a thousand miles of inland waterway, carrying a commerce upon which, in a large measure, hangs the industrial prosperity of this nation. It is a magnificent marine which has been created within the memory of living men. It is supremely American in every way, and most of all in its fashion of solving new problems, with no time for, or patience with, the old order of things which prevails along the leisurely waterfronts of ocean ports.

It is impossible to travel far on the Lakes without having an amazing series of contrasts and comparisons fairly flung in one's face by force of what he

---

## *The Greater America*

---

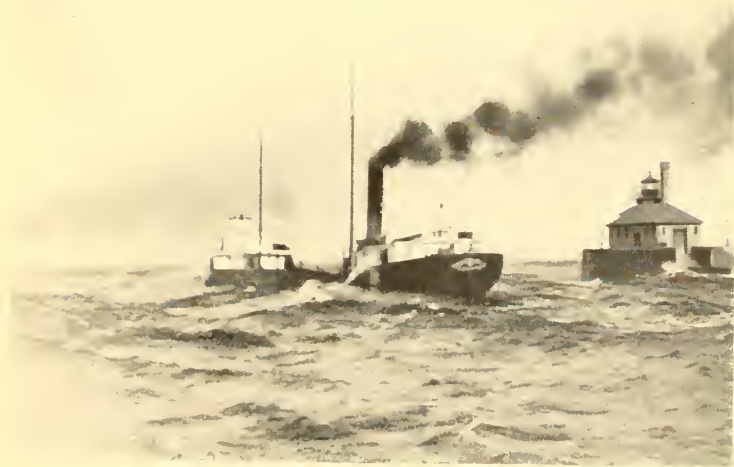
sees and hears. For example, one of the first cargoes of iron ore ever mined in the Lake Superior region was trundled aboard a little schooner about fifty years ago. Four days were required to put three hundred tons aboard her. A week was required to get the ore out of her. Two seasons ago the great steel steamer *Augustus B. Wolvin* loaded more than ten thousand tons of ore in eighty-nine minutes, or less than an hour and a half. And this huge cargo was jerked out of her in a little more than four hours. Steam and electricity have wrought no more spectacular miracles than in the handling of cargoes on the Great Lakes.

I soon discovered that the minutes are counted as precious in a round trip of two thousand miles. The hatches of the freighters we met or passed were lifted by steam before the vessels reached their docks, and as soon as the hawsers were fast the machinery was in motion for transferring cargo. There was once a mate who worked out a plan whereby fifteen minutes in a journey could be saved, by having the hatches off when the boat touched the dock. He was promoted for his ingenuity and given a ship of his own. In other words, the great railway systems have evolved no more economy of system in handling freight than this shipping, which laughs at the notion that "time and tide wait for no man."

When I sailed from Buffalo in the summer time our steamer was never out of sight of these long, deep-



*The vanishing lake carrier of other days*



*The modern freighter; a steel trough with a lid on it*





---

## *The Call of the Inland Seas*

---

laden freighters, which in one season can move thirty-five million tons of iron ore, besides the flood of grain from the western prairies. Last year the lake fleets carried nearly fifty million tons of American products. The sight of this wonderful parade of deep vessels, hurrying by night and day from Duluth and Chicago and a score of other ports, was enough to thrill any American who has been wont to suppose that his country owns no merchant marine. The Pittsburg Steamship Company controls nearly a million tons of shipping, all modern steel steamers and barges, compared with which the tonnage of the biggest of the ocean companies seems small.

Your big ocean liner or freighter needs half a dozen tugs to swing her and to handle her in the cramped confines of harbor and docking slip. Because the lake steamers are uncouth and barge-like of outline, it must not be presumed that they are awkwardly handled. Their skippers send them through twisting channels and pinching passages, with a skill and ease which would open the eyes of a master on the Atlantic. Longer and wider and deeper these vessels have been building, until now the six-hundred-foot craft has arrived, and the limit has not been reached. Such dimensions as these put these steel monsters in a class with the largest of the Atlantic liners. Yet a crew of twenty-five men will handle one of these freighters, and her master will carry her through a thousand miles of crowded

---

## *The Greater America*

---

waters and out of passages not much wider than a city street without need of towboat to help him.

For size and luxury of equipment our passenger steamer, the *Northwest*, would have been called a liner on the Atlantic. In the summer twilight we came to the St. Clair Flats and the ship canal, which unrolled across the lowlands like a silver ribbon. Here were hundreds of cottages, whose porches overhung the water, scattered along many little waterways which swarmed with skiffs and launches. It was like a huge colony of stranded houseboats, for there were no other roads than these water-trails. A man from Boston had been gradually shedding his reserve as one peels off a coat of sunburn, and this summer sight struck him as so immensely picturesque and novel that he deigned to make comment that was genuinely enthusiastic:

“Do you know, the farther west I go the better I like it. Why, I thought the people out here were so grossly absorbed in making money that they had neither the time nor the talent for enjoying life. There must be thousands of them in this American Venice. It’s most extraordinary for a big steamer to be loafing along here among all these cottages. You could toss the traditional biscuit from the deck and hit a happy householder in the eye almost anywhere.”

The sailing vessel is a thing of the past on the Lakes. No more of them are building, and the few that survive are aged and rotten, and belong with

---

## *The Call of the Inland Seas*

---

another age of shipping. Now and then you will see a lumber-laden schooner staggering on her course, and in the late autumn, when the haste to reap the freight harvest becomes a furious rush against the coming of the ice, crews risk their lives in manning every wornout hulk that will hold together and carry canvas for a final race against time. The shipyards almost ceased to build the wooden schooner as far back as 1873. Most of those which are still in commission, therefore, date back thirty years and more ago. The passing of the sailing vessel, which is still in process on the ocean highways, has been accomplished on the Great Lakes. American methods had no thought for the romance of sail. And the seamen who have risked their lives in these old wooden death-traps thank their stars that the schooner is so nearly numbered with the traditions of the Lakes.

The sight of one of these picturesque relics of the inland seas had a certain impressive value as a reminder and a contrast in conditions, whose story of expansion and change has been wrought with magical swiftness.

There are gray-haired skippers sailing the Great Lakes to-day who can spin yarns of the fur-trading era, when the cargoes of merchandise were portaged across into Lake Superior and loaded into little schooners which sailed by day and anchored at night because there were neither lighthouses nor channel marks. They saw the first steamer built to carry ore,

---

## *The Greater America*

---

and this was no longer ago than 1868. In this vessel, the *J. R. Hackett*, the engines were tucked far astern, and the deck was lined with hatches for taking on cargo with a speed previously undreamed of. This was the beginning of that unique style of marine architecture, "the steel trough with a lid on it," which swarms on the Great Lakes to-day. Then came the first iron vessel, and later the beginning of steel construction. These early builders and crews took chances for the benefit of American commerce. Boats of more than three hundred feet in length were more or less experimental for several years. One of the first of the big steel steamers broke in two in a gale off Whitefish Point, and only one of her crew got ashore. An old lake captain told me:

"I remember when the *Centurian* was loading for her first trip at Chicago in 1884. She was so big that the newspapers said there wasn't enough corn in the harbor to fill her up. She was the largest vessel on the Lakes, and she was the sensation of the day. At last she was filled and steamed to the westward, carrying 165,000 bushels of corn. Now they carry 450,000 bushels for a cargo, and take it as a matter of course. The size of the steamers in future will be limited only by the depth of water and the length and beam of the locks. When these are increased, the shipbuilders will be talking of a seven-hundred-foot vessel. When the Canadian lock was built, with a width of sixty feet, nobody dreamed

---

## *The Call of the Inland Seas*

---

that a boat would ever be built that would be cramped in getting through. This year a steamer will be launched with a beam of sixty feet, which shuts her out of the Canadian lock entirely."

As the boats increase in size and become more and more unwieldy, greater demands are made upon the skill and nerve of the navigator. To take a six-hundred-foot steamer across the St. Clair Flats and through the Detroit River and into St. Mary's Canal, even in the best of weather, is a task that requires the highest qualities of seamanship and the most vigilant care. But to feel his way through the Lakes on black nights, steering by range lights and sounding and guesswork, always on a lee shore and in waters which swarm with shipping as does Broadway with cabs after the theater, is a man's work of a big and stirring kind. And in all weathers the call of the inland seas, "Hurry, Oh, Hurry Faster," drives these skippers ahead until nothing short of a smash in the engine room will hold them in port.

In the autumn the Great Lakes take their cruel toll of the ships which risk lives and cargo that the mills may have ore and the seaboard may have grain. Then the newspapers of Detroit and Buffalo and Chicago begin to print such items as this:

"Fourteen lives are known to have been lost and three sturdy vessels sent to the bottom by the storm which swept over Lake Superior Friday night and Saturday. Seven other men are missing, and it is

---

## *The Greater America*

---

more than probable that when the vessels which sought shelter wherever they could find it are able to reach port, the tale of losses of ships will be larger and the death roll will total more than a score. The storm was one of the worst that ever swept over the lake. Sailing vessels were at its mercy, barges were torn loose from the steamers which towed them, and the largest and most modern steel vessels limped into port with hatches battered open, cargoes shifted and masts gone, to report men swept overboard in the struggle with the waves."

When December comes and the lake fleet is fighting to make a last run for it before the ice floes grip them, the matter-of-fact reports run like this:

"Detroit, Dec. 4.—Sheathed in ice, the steel steamer *Angeline*, about whose safety there has been much apprehension, arrived at this port for fuel last night. After leaving the head of the Lakes with a cargo of iron ore for a Lake Erie port, the *Angeline* was struck by a tempest off the Keneewaw Peninsula, and for two days had a terrific battle against the storm. Once the vessel was near Eagle Harbor, but her master, Captain S. A. Lyons, was afraid she would be driven on the rocks, so he turned about and headed for the open. According to the crew, they never saw such high seas on Lake Superior, and their dread was that two big waves would lift the vessel by the bow and stern and break her in two. They gave themselves up for lost through a night and a

---

## *The Call of the Inland Seas*

---

day. To First Mate McLean fell the duty of watching the hatches, to see that none were crushed in. With a rope fastened to his waist, and two of the crew standing in the shelter of the forward cabin, holding the rope, McLean time and again made his perilous rounds. Once a wave engulfed him and he was washed overboard, but the men at the end of the line hauled him back again. Captain Lyons remained on the bridge for forty-eight hours, and said that the seas ran higher than the vessel's smoke-stack."

From two hundred to four hundred vessels of all kinds are wrecked on the Lakes every season, a tragic roll of disaster to amaze the landlubber sailing along these land-locked stretches in pleasant summer weather. Even more impressive is the muster of missing ships recorded for these treacherous waters. There was the staunch schooner *Hume*, for instance, which cleared from Chicago fifteen years ago. She was well-found and ably manned, but neither spar nor dead body was ever washed ashore to hint at the manner of her fate. In the same year the schooner *Atlanta* vanished in Lake Superior, and her end was also utterly mysterious.

"Then there was the passenger steamer *Chicora*," said my friend the skipper. "She was one of the finest and ablest steamers on the Lakes in her time. She sailed from St. Joseph, Michigan, in the winter, bound for Chicago, crowded with people. That was



---

## *The Greater America*

---

the last ever seen or heard from her. Not a splinter of wreckage was ever found, and she simply blotted herself off the shipping list without even a farewell whisper. Even worse than this was the loss of the big steel steamer *W. H. Gilcher*, in 1892. She carried a crew of sixteen men and foundered somewhere in Lake Michigan, without leaving a sign to tell how it happened. She was missing, and that's all we know. Life on the Lakes isn't all a yachting excursion, my son."

A hardy breed of men, doing their duty as they find it, the sailors of the Great Lakes are more and more in demand to man the new fleets that are building every year. While the shipyards of the seacoast were wailing over the dearth of business, the shipyards of the Lakes booked orders for thirty-one steel vessels for the season of 1906, in size from six to twelve thousand tons capacity, with a total value of fourteen million dollars. While those who prefer to search out the dark side of things are finding reasons for mourning the fate of their country, here on the Great Lakes is a vast field of organized endeavor which is quietly serving the needs of the people from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic seaboard; armies of hard-working men and mighty squadrons of ships hurrying to keep pace with the steadily increasing demands of commerce, holding railroad rates in check; ministering to the needs of many millions, in clean and businesslike fashion; moving the raw materials,





*The old way of handling cargo*



*Where steam has succeeded brawn*



---

## *The Call of the Inland Seas*

---

and making for such a national prosperity as the world has never known.

Without these fleets the grain crop of the West would not be worth harvesting, for the railroads would be choked in trying to transport half of it. Iron and grain—these are the giant factors, looming above all others in the commercial and industrial power of the country, and they are so largely dependent upon the traffic of the Great Lakes that this shipping is one of the proudest assets of the American flag. And the men who have built it up from its crude beginnings, half a century ago, are pretty good Americans.

## CHAPTER II

### PAST AND PRESENT AT THE "SOO"

THE modern spirit of the Great Lakes is to be found at high tide at the locks of the "Soo," where the passing shipping is almost double the volume of that which finds its way through the Suez, Kiel and Manchester ship canals combined. Tonnage statistics are more or less meaningless to the layman, and he accepts the oft-repeated story of the traffic through the "Soo" as a fine display of fine big figures which go to prove what a great country this is. It is another thing, however, to see this shipping go through the locks. It is one of the wonders of America as truly as Niagara Falls or the Yosemite. And Man, with pride in himself and his doings on the face of this planet, can find satisfaction in the boastful truth that this is a wonder wrought by his own hands.

For six months of the year an average of a big steamer every fifteen minutes of the night and day passes through the lock and ship canal which join Lake Superior and Lake Huron. Try to imagine, if you please, what an imposing spectacle would be made by a parade of ocean liners and freighters filing up the North or East River of New York, at fifteen-minute intervals, twenty-four hours a day, six months on end.

---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

It appealed to me as a sight for mortal man to be proud of, and for an American to cheer with his hat off. It was clean, honest, splendid achievement, wrought out by virtue of brains and pluck and far-sightedness. Into the St. Mary's River and canal these vessels fairly trod on each other's heels, waiting their turn at the lock. In the rapids of the river around which the ship canal has been dug were the canoes of a handful of Chippewa Indians, and on the bank were the tents and wigwams of their camping parties. They were living and thinking about as did their grandfathers when the white fur traders first came among them. And near the modern locks I saw the tiny stone lock built by the Northwest Fur Company in 1790 to permit its canoes and batteaux to make passage between the Lakes without an arduous portage.

Men alive to-day can remember when ten thousand Indians from the North came to Mackinac Island every year to camp and traffic with the fur traders, and when Sault Ste. Marie was a small fur-trading post in the heart of the wilderness, inhabited by Canadians, half-breeds and Indians. It was not easy for me to realize that the railroad crept into this part of the Michigan Peninsula less than twenty years ago, and that many people of the town can recall living through dreary winters before the whistle of the locomotive had broken their long and snow-bound isolation.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

In those times the "Soo" was closely linked in summer by means of the steamers passing daily, but winter made their situation as remote as if they dwelt in the Hudson's Bay country. From the time the first snow fell until the big thaw came in the spring, the people seldom saw a strange face, and the carrier who brought the mail by a dog sled from the nearest railroad point was an important figure in the community.

Traditions of this sort still linger so strongly that dog teams are plentiful in the region of the "Soo" to-day and are still found so useful that the summer tourist is often surprised to see an outfit of this kind in the streets at the season when wheels are used instead of runners. In winter the mail carrier and his dogs are still found in this region, and one of these teams plies with the mail pouch between White Fish Point and the "Soo," which are sixty-three miles apart.

Twice each week over the frozen surface of Lake Superior trails the dog-sled to cover this route, often with the thermometer twenty degrees below zero. Unlike the old Indian mail carriers, he has a sleigh large enough to give him a seat, and he runs beside his dogs only when it is advisable to keep from freezing to death. The carrier drives a four-in-hand, which he raised from puppies. They are large and powerful brutes, half St. Bernard and half Scotch collie, the best possible cross for a sled dog. They

---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

are handy also for getting about the country in the summer, and one can often see this odd team tearing along the streets of the "Soo" at a breakneck gait, the dogs hitched to a four-wheeled buggy and driven by lines fastened to their collars.

A veterinary surgeon of the "Soo" has six of the finest dogs in the Upper Peninsula, and drives them almost daily during the winter months. His trips extend as far as St. Ignace Detour, and other points within one hundred miles of the "Soo." Last winter he made a trip to St. Ignace, stopping over night on the way, and covered a distance of sixty-five miles in six and one-half hours by actual time on the road.

Wrapped in a huge fur overcoat, and with a buffalo robe tucked around him, this hardy son of Michigan starts out with his six dogs in the fiercest storm in the coldest weather, and will pass any team of horses on the road. In making a long journey, with favorable conditions, his dogs will keep up a pace of ten miles an hour and wear down any horse.

The dog is still the most reliable means of transport through the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in the long winters, and civilization has not been able to retire him along with vanished relics of the older and ruder times. Until the railroad came the mails were supposed to arrive at least once in ten days, but sometimes a month elapsed between the visits of the sturdy Indian runners, who made their trips of more than three hundred miles to Bay City through a

---

## *The Greater America*

---

wilderness inhabited by wild animals and a few scattered tribes of Indians. It is only forty years ago since there were three white settlements between the "Soo" and Bay City. These were old Mackinaw, at the very northernmost point of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, and Cheboygan and Alpena, still further south along the west shore of Lake Huron.

One of the most famous of the Indian runners, John Boucher, lived until very recently. Sharing the honors of his hardy calling was Antoine Paquette, who was not a full-blooded Indian, although he had the Indian's knowledge of the woods and the trail. For twenty-five years these two men made their regular trips to and from Bay City through the densest growth of pine forest on the continent, and over snow which was often six feet deep on the level.

Their sleds were large enough to carry only the mails and a few small packages, and the men usually ran the entire distance, keeping pace with their fleet-footed dogs. Boucher and Paquette were men of tremendous physical vigor, accustomed to the hardships of frontier life, and both lived into ripe old age. They usually drove eight or ten dogs in tandem, and the descendants of their sturdy animals are highly prized to-day for dog teams in the "Soo" region.

With them in this mail service were William Mieron and Edward Vernier, two Frenchmen, who completed the list of four carriers needed to keep up the mail service in the winter. To some of the old



---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

inhabitants of the "Soo" it seems but a little while ago that the arrival of the carrier with letters and newspapers from the outside world was an event of stirring importance in the life of the village. A crowd always gathered at the post-office whenever the eager, yelping dogs came tearing down the main street at the end of their long journey. Newspapers and magazines were passed around from hand to hand, and often little groups of men and women would gather at the home of some neighbor and listen while one of their number read aloud.

The summer visitor can scarcely realize that this modern-looking town is so closely associated with the traditions of frontier life. The shores of the river and the islands in the upper end of Lake Huron and the lower end of Lake Superior are largely peopled with Indians and half-breeds, who cling to their tribal customs. They bring their canoes loaded with willow-ware and other souvenirs for sale, and during the summer are a picturesque feature of street life at the "Soo." After running across a group of these natives, and then sighting two or three dog teams hitched to little buggies and wagons, waiting outside the stores while their owners were shopping, I was vividly impressed with the curious mixture of the past and present which is to be found in this Michigan town.

The pioneers and frontiersmen of the storied West have seen a marvelous epoch of transformation

---

## *The Greater America*

---

beyond the Mississippi, and yet nowhere did I find the drama of American expansion more strikingly focused than here at the locks of the "Soo." This is the mightiest link between the East and the West, between the old and the new, second only in importance in the history of American material growth to the building of the early transcontinental railroads. Only half a century has passed since the opening of the first ship canal and locks at the "Soo." At that time the project was considered by many wise Americans as extravagant and visionary beyond words. It appealed to Henry Clay as on a par with asking Congress to make an appropriation for building a canal on the moon. Compared with the boldness of the men who were behind this project, the construction of the Panama Canal is a tame and conservative undertaking.

The first steamer to navigate the waters of Lake Superior was the *Independence*, of less than three hundred tons burden. She was laboriously hauled across the portage at the "Soo," an undertaking which required seven weeks. Previous to this epoch-making event a few small schooners were hauled across from Lake Huron, by main strength, into what was then an uncharted and unpeopled inland sea.

As early as 1836, however, or as soon as Michigan was admitted to the Union, the governor advocated the building of a ship canal by the State in his first



*The Soo—the mightiest link between the East and West*



---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

message to the new Legislature. A little later Congress was asked to give a hundred thousand acres of land to aid in the work. The effort failed, after many members of Congress had echoed the sentiment of Henry Clay, that the bill "contemplated a work beyond the remotest settlement in the United States."

The discovery of copper deposits on the shores of Lake Superior a few years later gave the project a new lease of life. In 1852 Congress granted three-quarters of a million acres of land to aid the State of Michigan in building the canal. The discussion of the project, both in the House and the Senate, was not unlike that which has been recently waged over the Panama Canal. The type of canal and the size of the locks were earnestly fought pro and con. Learned engineers finally agreed that a lock two hundred and fifty feet long would amply provide for the largest vessels possible to conceive as ever navigating those waters.

Opposed to the engineers and the opinion of Congress was a young man, Charles T. Harvey, who was visiting the Baptist Mission at Sault Ste. Marie. He was a western agent for the Fairbanks Scales Company, and neither a trained engineer nor an expert on canal building. He was only twenty-one years old at the time, but he was an American from his boot heels up. When he heard of the passage of the land grant by Congress he began to look over the projected site of the canal. His brain was big enough

---

## *The Greater America*

---

to conceive the immense future of this undertaking, and he sought and obtained from his employers a furlough and an expense allowance while he should promote the enterprise before the Michigan Legislature.

Having secured an engineer in New York, young Harvey made a private survey of the canal site, and became convinced that the lock should be at least a hundred feet longer than in the plan adopted by Congress. His proposed dimensions exceeded those of any other lock in the world at that time, but he was not in the least abashed. Even the lake navigators laughed at the size of his lock. Captain E. D. Ward, at that time the most important shipowner on the Lakes, opposed the larger lock with tooth and nail, on the ground that a two-hundred-and-fifty-foot lock would be sufficient for all time, and that more ambitious plans would result in failure, for lack of financial support.

Young Harvey succeeded in having his plan adopted, and then formed a company, backed by the Messrs. Fairbanks, which secured the contract for constructing the lock. It was a huge undertaking for those times. The "Soo" was a wilderness. The nearest railroad was several hundred miles away, and it took six weeks to receive a reply to a letter sent to New York. In order to obtain labor, agents had to be sent to New York to board incoming ships and hire parties of immigrants.

In the winter there were only eight hours of



---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

sunlight, and the temperature often stood at thirty-five below zero. An epidemic of cholera broke out and killed ten per cent. of the workmen, but the work was not suspended for a single day. Once two thousand laborers struck. Young Harvey quietly hid all the provisions in the woods, and refused to serve out rations until the men had returned to work. They surrendered within twenty-four hours.

The canal and lock were finished within two years, at a cost of less than a million dollars. There were no cities on the shores of Lake Superior, and no wheat belt in the country to the westward. Then came the Civil War, which checked the growth of this vast region. In 1870, however, the Federal Government awoke to the needs of the lake navigation, and found that already the three-hundred-and-sixty-foot lock, a hundred feet longer than Congress had approved twenty years before, was too small for the vessels which were steaming east and west. Therefore the old lock was ripped out and two greater locks built by the Federal Government at a cost of more than two million dollars.

They sufficed no more than fifteen years, although the larger of the two was five hundred and fifteen feet in length. In 1896 the Poe lock, built by the brilliant army engineer of that name, was completed, at a cost of four million dollars. It is eight hundred feet long, and it was expected that four vessels could be locked through at once. It was hardly finished

---

## *The Greater America*

---

before it was found that not more than one modern freighter could be locked through at once. Meantime the Canadian Government had built a lock at a cost of two million dollars, but already there is much talk of the need of a new and larger lock in order adequately to handle the mighty torrent of traffic and the increasing size of the steamers.

It is bracing to read what General Poe had to say about those old locks at the "Soo," in whose construction there was none of the savor of graft and scamp work that hangs about too many public undertakings of this day.

"On the whole the canal was a remarkable work for its time and purpose," he wrote. "The construction of the locks especially bore evidence of a master's hand in their design and execution, and it was no reflection on the engineer in charge that experience developed certain objectionable features. The locks are now being torn out to make way for new ones, and every step in their destruction reveals the excellence of their workmanship, the honest character of the materials employed and the faithful compliance with the conditions of the contract under which they were built, not merely in the letter, but also in the spirit. All honor, then, to every man connected with their design and construction. They were long in advance of their day, and if commerce had not outgrown their dimensions they would have done good service for a century. I must confess to a feeling of



---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

great regret that it has become necessary to destroy these first locks. Inanimate though they were, they seemed to appeal to every sentiment of respect. They had never failed to respond to any demand within their capacity, they had contributed in a higher degree than any other one feature to the development of the country to the westward of them, and, having done such good work, are now to be obliterated in the interest of that very commerce they did so much to establish. The man who, knowing their history, can see them go without compunction is made of other stuff than I am, and, if he be an engineer, he has no genuine love for his profession nor pride in the achievement of those who successfully apply its teachings to the best examples of his art."

Charles Harvey, a vigorous man of eighty, lived to attend the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the building of the first canal and lock, which was held at the "Soo" in 1905. Such men as he, who have lived to see the wildest dreams come true, who have beheld the mighty works of a nation wrought from small beginnings, cannot be convinced that the country is going to the dogs.

The Federal Government has let its ocean merchant service languish and die, but it has dealt wisely and with a generous hand in the development of the lake-carrying trade. Fifty million dollars have been spent in deepening channels and cutting canals. The commerce between Lake Superior and

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Lake Erie passes through more than forty miles of artificial waterway excavated by the government, or a greater length of restricted waterway than is planned for the Panama Canal. Even fifty millions for dredging and excavating ship channels is a small toll to pay, when one realizes that the value of the iron ore alone which has been carried along this water route is more than a billion dollars.

Bigger things have been done here than piling up dollars for individual and national wealth. Stand beside the American locks at the "Soo" and watch one of the great new freighters steam from the canal into the cradled basin of masonry. In length, nine of her would measure a mile. She is crammed with ten thousand tons of ore from the richest iron mines in the world, the Mesabi range, which was discovered and made use of only fifteen years ago. The steel mills of Pittsburg are waiting for this cargo, which was poured into the vessel's hold at the West Superior docks like a dusky avalanche. Mined by steam, this vast freight of ore is waiting in the lock to be lowered, with the ship that contains it, a sheer distance of eighteen feet. The brains which planned and the cunning hands which made the labor-saving mechanisms by which the steamer ore was mined and the steamer loaded are matched by the skill that sets this lock at work.

A half dozen men in blue uniform, scattered along the side of the lock, push levers and set engines

---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

working. The massive gate closes behind the steamer, pushed by hydraulic power. Powerful pumps begin their toil, the steamer begins to drop, and foot by foot she is lowered toward the bottom of the lock, until in a few minutes she rides almost twenty feet below her former level.

The toil of engines in the big power house, the work of a few men in control of them, and all day long and through the night the great bulks of these cargo-carriers are raised and lowered with no more fuss and flurry than the operation of an elevator in an office building. Once through the lock, the steamer moves on her course to her distant dock, there to be unloaded by another handful of quiet, self-reliant men manipulating a few wheels and levers which set to work the strength of thousands of men focused in steam and electric power.

On a majestic scale, in every link of this industrial chain, American invention and talent for organization have worked to reduce the cost of the products of the mine and the farm and the forest, benefiting both the producer and the consumer. Brains have almost eliminated brawn. When ten thousand tons of ore have been carried from the mines of Lake Superior to the mills of the Pittsburg district, no more than fifty men have handled them through all stages of transportation. Forty years ago the freight rate from Marquette to Ohio ports was from three to six dollars a ton. To-day it averages seventy-five cents a ton.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

With such a marvelous development of wealth and commerce in a lifetime as the Great Lakes have displayed, it is small wonder that Francis H. Clergue thought that nothing was impossible when he planned his empire of industry at the "Soo." He failed because his ideas were bigger than his ability to execute them at the time, but he was not a visionary, and his dreams will all come true within the next generation.

There is something inspiring even in such a collapse as overtook him. He had the spirit of the men who have done the biggest things for American material success, but, in the plain Anglo-Saxon, he "bit off more than he could chew." Like the young Harvey who built the first canal and lock, he was stirred by the vast possibilities of the "Soo." He also was a young man, less than thirty-five, when he was sent West to seek a new water-power that might be turned to profit. The "Soo" bewitched him, with its fall of eighteen feet in the St. Mary's River between the two lakes.

Clergue obtained a Canadian charter for a water-power canal and constructed it. Then he found himself with twenty thousand horse power on his hands and no purchaser in sight, for the "hard times" of the early nineties frightened capital away from such pioneering enterprises as this; therefore he decided to use it himself. He knew a good deal about paper mills because he had worked in them in Maine.

---

## *Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

There was no end of low-priced timber for pulp in the forests around the "Soo."

He built a pulp mill, one of the largest in the country, running night and day by water-power. He was no more than fairly started in the work of transforming the sleepy old town at the "Soo." A little later a second power canal was built, on the Michigan side, to develop forty thousand horse power. Then Clergue planned a railroad, the Algoma Central, to connect with the Canadian Pacific, two hundred miles to the northward, and thence to Hudson's Bay, five hundred miles away. He received the promise of Canadian land grants of nearly four million acres, including the mineral and timber rights. Having acquired rich iron mines, he built a blast furnace, and then a steel plant and a rail mill. He rolled the first rail in Canada, made from Canada pig iron, smelted from Ontario ore. These works were nowhere surpassed for completeness of equipment. Meanwhile Clergue was building sawmills and developing more mining properties, constructing an electric-light plant for the town of Sault Ste. Marie, building street-car systems, and planning new industries on every hand.

He found the "Soo" a primitive settlement, no more than a supply station for passing ships. Within eight years he had built not only his paper and iron and steel and lumber mills, but also car shops, ferry and traction lines, freight and passenger steamers, and a railroad, in operation for a hundred miles. He

---

## *The Greater America*

---

agreed to settle annually a thousand immigrants on his land grants in the Canadian wilderness, and two thousand men were chopping wood for him in his forests. The cash investment in the Clergue enterprises was twenty-five million dollars.

One industry was to feed another, and the whole was to be correlated as a great interdependent industrial community. The splendid scheme was extravagantly executed, and disaster came before all the plants could be operated as a unit. The dazzling fabric collapsed because no more cash could be obtained to round out the undertaking. In the water-power and in the massively constructed buildings which await another master spirit to set them humming with industry, the owners have an asset that must some day realize all the dreams of its promoter, the young man from Maine who began with an idea and raised twenty-five million dollars in the struggle to make it come true.

During his leadership Clergue resided in the old blockhouse built by the Hudson's Bay Company. There could be no more dramatic contrast, even in fiction, than between this rugged old blockhouse, with the men who built it and lived in it, and the modern captain of industry who wove within these walls the projects that should set a thousand men at work to build and to produce, where one Indian fur trapper roamed no more than half a century ago. With the vein of sentiment which led him to use the old

---

*Past and Present at the "Soo"*

---

blockhouse for his living quarters, Clergue restored the primitive lock made by the fur traders, and it is preserved on the Company's grounds as a memorial of obliterated conditions on the northern American frontier.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STORY OF A COPPER MINE

As I neared the Michigan copper country, after the voyage through the Lakes, there was little to suggest that devastation of God's green landscape which elsewhere goes hand in hand with mining operations. Back of the city of Houghton rose a range of billowing hills, wooded with a second growth of timber. Against the skyline loomed a red shaft-house or two, looking not wholly unlike grain elevators. And along the crest of the hill trailed a long train of ore-laden cars like a monstrous snake. The scattered towns through which the trolley took me on the way to Calumet had little of that ugliness and squalor of most mining communities, nor was the air heavy with smoke and foul with vapors. The clean breeze swept over fields and patches of woodland, and I perceived that this was a far more attractive landscape than that which is left in the wake of the coal or iron miner. In fact, the tall red shaft-houses which dotted the fields were almost the only signs of the prodigious activity that toiled underground by night and day.

Scattered over this rolling country were a dozen different towns, all part of one vast mining camp, Hecla, and Calumet, Red Jacket, Blue Jacket, Yellow





*Where copper is king*



---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

Jacket, Wolverine, Tamarack, Osceola and Laurium. More than forty thousand people were living in these towns and depending on copper for their bread. Five thousand men toiled for the Calumet and Hecla Company, and more than half of this army was employed in the underground workings. There were more miles of streets beneath the surface than in the towns on top. Two hundred miles of shafts, drifts and cross-cuts honeycombed the earth as far down as a mile from the surface. To support this amazing system of underground highways, this company was using thirty million feet of timber every year. It was clearing the country of timber for five hundred miles and was eating up the northwestern forests faster than all the lumbering interests. The company has its own logging crews and mills and its great forests. Its lumbering activity is a huge industry in itself.

Little more than a half century has passed since copper was the lure that led men to explore a wilderness as near home as the upper peninsula of Michigan, and to reveal a magnificent storehouse of treasure on the shores of Lake Superior. Late into the last century that region was considered so hopeless a wilderness, fit only for the Indian, the fur trader and the trapper, that Michigan made vehement protest against its inclusion within her borders, and almost put the matter to a clash of arms with the State forces of Ohio. The pioneer settlers of what was then the

---

## *The Greater America*

---

remote West were not looking for iron or copper. They had neither the means for transportation nor manufacture, and they pressed on past the Lake Superior country with an indifference that seems amazing in the light of after events.

It had been known for centuries that this region was rich in minerals. The hardy Jesuits, who were as keen prospectors after natural resources as after aboriginal souls, found copper by the shore of the inland sea that was later called Lake Superior. And as early as 1640 a history of America written in French declared that "there are in this region mines of copper, tin, antimony and lead." The Indians of that time were mining copper in crude fashion, but even they were not the pioneer discoverers. Stone hammers were found beside ancient workings whose mounds of earth were topped by trees of primeval growth. More remarkable than this, hewn wooden props, not wholly decayed, were found supporting masses of copper mined in a prehistoric age. The Mound Builders, or a race akin to them, had discovered and exploited, without the aid of a promotion syndicate or an issue of watered stock, the earliest American copper mines.

A hundred and forty years ago an adventurous Englishman, Captain Jonathan Carver, voyaged Lake Superior and went home to form a company for developing the mineral wealth of that trackless territory. English investors were more timid then than

---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

now about American securities, and Captain Carver, who deserved a better fortune for his daring enterprise, saw his schemes go glimmering.

It was left for a young American geologist, Douglas Houghton, to explore this peninsula and awaken his countrymen to the riches that lay at their hand. He perished in a storm on Lake Superior at the age of thirty-six, but his brief career wrought a mighty work for his nation. In a birch-bark canoe he skirted the south shore of Lake Superior for voyage after voyage, making observations and gathering data with the eye of a practical scientist and the imagination of a tamer of wilderness places. In 1841 he submitted a report to the State government of Michigan, in whose employ he was, and there began a rush of treasure-seekers into a country far more inaccessible than the Klondike of to-day.

Copper was the prize sought by thousands of prospectors, most of whom struggled with the severest hardships, only to abandon their claims in disgust and return to civilization empty-handed. But a beginning had been made, and American enterprise, no longer content to let England enjoy what was almost a monopoly of the copper production of the world, buckled down to the task of opening its own mines.

This was long before the discovery of the great deposits of Montana, which have yielded fabulous wealth for the copper kings of Butte and Anaconda and Helena. Nor has the Lake Superior region been

besmirched by such a colossal war of greed as has befouled Montana politics and made its copper mines a by-word for stock jobbery and a gorgeous variety of corruption. By contrast, it is as wholesome and clean a story of American commercial success as one can find, this development of the copper resources of the Lake Superior region, as typified in the famous Calumet and Hecla mine.

Copper is a sturdy king among metals to-day. As the Age of Steel has followed the Age of Iron, so the succeeding industrial epoch is to be the Age of Electricity, whose foundation is copper. Already this metal adds five hundred million dollars each year to the wealth of the world, and its reign is no more than in its sturdy youth. Here, for example, is this Calumet and Hecla property, which has never gained that kind of spectacular notoriety that is given a famous gold mine. Yet the product of this one group of shafts has paid more dividends than have been reaped by any other mining corporation in the world.

Almost one hundred million dollars have been paid to the lucky stockholders in the last thirty-five years, on a total capitalization of only two and a half millions. In one recent period of five years the mine paid twenty-seven million dollars in dividends, or more than double its capital stock each year. Small wonder that the group of conservative Boston men who direct this magnificent bonanza have fought shy of

---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

such top-heavy and inflated combinations as "Amalgamated Copper."

The Calumet and Hecla mines were discovered forty years ago. Tradition has it that an astute and industrious pig, while rooting amid the forests a few miles back from Lake Superior, turned up the chunk of copper which unearthed this hidden mine. The pig story is plausible enough and has no lack of historical confirmation from various other sources. In fact, it is a sort of historical mode or fashion for famous mines to have been discovered by an inquisitive pig or a wandering burro with an agile hoof. Somewhere in Mexico there is a silver pig with jeweled eyes, holding a place of honor in a cathedral, in memory of the location of a fine silver mine by one of these porcupine prospectors. In crediting a pig with the discovery of Calumet and Hecla the traditions have been faithfully observed.

The Calumet and Hecla of to-day is worth a visit as an impressive object lesson of how well a great corporation can look after its properties and employees without impairing its dividends. It can be said of certain other American corporations that their properties were discovered by men and have been managed by pigs ever since. The Calumet and Hecla has reversed this procedure.

This upper corner of the staunch American State of Michigan is a show ground of the people of thirty nations at work, side by side, in peace and comfort.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

The native-born is outnumbered on a basis of one American to a hundred foreigners. The Cornwall and Finnish miners lead in numbers, followed by the Irish, Scotch, Welsh, Germans, Polish, French, Danish, Norwegians, Swedish, Russians, Hollanders, Greek, Swiss, Austrians, Belgians, negroes, Slavs, Bohemians, with a sprinkling above ground of Chinese, Arabians, Persians, and one family of Laplanders.

This is an amazing medley of races, in which the American seems fairly lonesome. Among the local newspapers are the *Weekly Glasnik*, the *Daily Paivalehti*, *The American Soumetar*, and *La Sentinelli*. Even the leading American newspaper publishes for the benefit of its subscribers a column in the dialect of Cornwall, which includes such poetic gems as this:

“Wheal Damsel es a fitty mine,  
Next door to Wheal Kiser;  
Ef the sun forgot to shine  
We should never miss her;  
Give us candle, clay and cap,  
We can see where we must stap,  
Ef to work we do incline,  
Down to Old Wheal Damsel.

CHORUS:

“Pay-day comes on Saturday,  
Restin’ time on Sunday,



---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

Shall we work or shall we play  
'Pon Maze Monday?\*

“Ef not chucked with powder smawk  
And the smeel of dyneemite,  
'T'es so aisy straight to walk  
As for dogs to bark and bite;  
But touch pipe in kiddlywink  
Weth some fourp'nnny for to drink,  
Reason 'pon its throne will rock,  
Forgettin' Old Wheal Damsel.  
Oh, there's trouble in the glass,  
Wuss than boyer-baiten,  
When the thursty time do pass,  
Peggy's tongue es waiten.”

The men from Cornwall chuckle over such bits of the home tongue as this, but need no “Maze Monday” to recover from the effects of visiting the saloons of Calumet or Red Jacket. In fact, this polyglot community is so singularly law abiding that the horde of sociologists that is rampant in the land should organize a personally conducted tour to this favored community. There is no municipal police force in the district. The towns are under the supervision of a few constables and watchmen, after the manner of one of the old-fashioned New England village communities. The Calumet and Hecla

\*In the old days Cornish miners used to require the Monday after pay-day to get over the effects of visiting the kiddlywink, or village public-house—hence the name of “Maze Monday.”

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Company maintains a metropolitan fire department of its own and carries its own insurance. This relieves the town from the burden of fire protection.

In the town of Calumet two-thirds of the public revenue is received from saloon license fees, and yet drunkenness seldom becomes disorderly. This town has an income of sixty thousand dollars a year from fees and taxes, and the officials have on their hands the problem of spending a handsome surplus for the benefit of their community. They are using it in paving streets and for other permanent improvements instead of in supporting a police force and paying salaries to a lot of political barnacles.

This Calumet, a large and thriving town composed of men of more than a score of different nations, is so much more advanced than most American cities that it has a municipal theater, built by the public funds at a cost of a hundred thousand dollars. This handsome stone playhouse is leased to a manager who pays the town four per cent. interest on its investment, and who is held responsible for the conduct of the enterprise on a popular and efficient basis.

Here is a large community peopled by foreigners who are alleged to be pouring into this country faster than we can absorb them. They are called a menace to our institutions, and agitators declare that Americanism will be submerged by this swelling tide. The Calumet and Hecla Company has worked out its own solution of the immigration problem. Its miners and

---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

their families are treated as human beings, and they are good enough Americans to put to shame the spirits and achievements of many a community which brags of its native stock. This company has no complaint to make on the score of lack of efficiency among its employees, because they are given a fair show to live decently and make their communities clean and prosperous. It has gone about the business of assimilating a foreign population by methods which do not seem to have occurred to the Chicago packers.

The company owns about twelve hundred dwelling houses in the towns around its mines. They are rented to its employees at an average charge of six per cent. on the actual cost of the building, plus the cost of maintenance. The miners pay from six to eight dollars in rent for the small frame houses, not tenements, with a patch of ground big enough for a kitchen garden. Wages are never reduced to fatten dividends. If it becomes necessary to curtail the output, a certain number of men are laid off for a time, but wages are not cut. And wages have been good enough to permit one thousand of these miners to purchase outright from the company their own homes, which is a pretty solid argument in itself.

On the company's lands there are about thirty churches, occupied by more than a dozen denominations. The company gave the sites for all these churches, and in many cases has furnished cash aid toward the erection and maintenance funds, without

---

## *The Greater America*

---

regard to creed. There are eight school-houses on the Calumet and Hecla property, most of which were built by the corporation. In these school-houses the children of Finns and Welsh and Slavs and Germans, along with the children of twenty other nationalities, are fused as in a melting pot to become good Americans of the second generation, speaking English as their common tongue, and saluting the Stars and Stripes above their buildings.

A handsome stone library was built by the company without the aid of Andrew Carnegie, for it has been the policy here to return some of the profits in building institutions to better the condition of the toilers who helped to make the wealth, instead of scattering these profits elsewhere. This free library contains more than sixteen thousand volumes in a score of languages, and it is used and enjoyed by the men and women of all the races that live in this region. There is a fine stone clubhouse, built for the miners by their employers, containing bathrooms, bowling-alleys, etc. There is also at Lake Linden, where the stamp mills and smelters are situated, a combination library and clubhouse.

The company maintains for its people a hospital that is widely noted for the completeness of its surgical and laboratory apparatus. A dozen physicians of the hospital staff are ready to respond to the call of any miner or his family needing their services. In 1877 a miners' benefit fund was founded by the



*The toilers of the copper country*



---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

company, and its management was turned over to a board of directors chosen by the workmen. This fund pays death and disability benefits, and has disbursed an immense sum since its beginning, every dollar of which has gone to the sick or injured, or to families who have lost their bread-winners by accident or disease.

Whenever a surplus has accumulated in this fund, it has been invested in the shares of the company, bought in the open market, and this kind of investment has been notably profitable. In one recent year the outlay in benefits from this fund was sixty-five thousand dollars, and the value of the fund, or reserve and surplus in hand, was a hundred and thirty-six thousand dollars. To maintain this fund every employee of the company pays from his wages fifty cents a month. And for every fifty cents paid in by the miner the company adds to the fund a half dollar from its own pocket. It is, therefore, a combined charity, philanthropy and assessment organization, which has acted as a splendid factor in promoting contentment and keeping at arm's length the suffering of helpless poverty.

Copper mining is clean work, as mining goes, and the men behind this gigantic enterprise have tried to make their miners feel that thrift and comfort can be theirs for a little effort. The prudent Finnish and English miners save their wages, with an eye to the future. As soon as they have funds ahead they begin



---

## *The Greater America*

---

to look up cheap farming and timber tracts for settlement. Then they move their families out of the copper country, and swing the ax instead of the pick, and get their little farms under way. Thus they help to build up the new country of northern Michigan, and to found American families close to the soil whence the strength of the nation has come.

But as long as they dwell within the shadows of the tall, red shaft-houses of Calumet and Hecla, they think and talk little else besides copper. They keep in touch with the copper mines and markets of the world, from Montana to Australia, and from the Rio Tinto, in Spain, to the deep pits of Cornwall. One of these thrifty towns strikes the stranger as too big for its population. There are few men in the streets through the daylight hours, and the long blocks of stores seem deserted. Here is a world in which half of the men are underground and a good share of the remainder asleep at home, wherefore you can see the whole town above ground and in the streets only on Sunday.

These miners go deep after copper. If you go to the famous Red Jacket shaft, for instance, you find the most powerful hoisting machinery in the world, huge engines of as much as eight thousand horsepower, which reel and unreel drums of wire cable that wind down a straight mile below the surface. These engines hoist ten-ton cars of ore one mile at the rate of forty miles an hour, or from the bottom



---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

to the top of this stupendous hole in the ground in ninety seconds.

This is the deepest mining shaft in the world. Apart from this fact, perhaps the most interesting feature of the Red Jacket shaft is in the theory that it is possible to detect the effect of the earth's revolution in a hole as deep as this. No less an authority than President McNair of the Michigan College of Mines has explained the belief that nothing dropped in this deepest of mining shafts can ever reach bottom without colliding with the east side of the shaft.

"This is due to the motion of the earth," said he. "The article dropped, no matter what its shape or size may be, will invariably be found clinging to the east side of the shaft. One day a monkey-wrench was dropped by a miner, but it failed to reach the bottom, and was found lodged against the east side of the shaft several hundred feet down. We decide that to make a proper test of the theory it would be worth while to experiment with a small, heavy, spherical body. So we suspended a marble tied with a thread about twelve feet below the mouth of the shaft. We then burned the thread with a lighted match in order not to disturb the exact fall of the marble. About five hundred feet down it brought up against the east side of the shaft. When miners have fallen down the shaft the result has been similar. Their bodies, badly torn, have been found lodged against the east side of the shaft. A carload of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

rock was dumped down the deepest mining shaft in South Africa, but not a particle of it reached the bottom."

Professor McNair has said also that the limit of depth to which mines can be driven and worked has not yet been reached. The temperature at the bottom of Red Jacket was almost ninety degrees when it was first opened, but this has been reduced by ventilation to between seventy and eighty degrees, at which miners work in comparative comfort. In the opinion of Professor McNair, the Red Jacket shaft will supply the most valuable data ever gathered relating to the thickness and densities of the earth's crust. "The deep shafts in other parts of the world begin at an altitude and end at, or above, sea level," said he, "whereas this shaft pierces the earth's crust deeper and farther below the ocean level than any other hole in existence. Scientific investigations have been in progress for some time, and we hope to make public some interesting results."

It is a fascinating hole in the ground, simply because of its amazing depth, but it is not an easy hole to enter if you are not personally vouched for by President Agassiz of the Calumet and Hecla Company. Strangers are not admitted, and the reason is startling. Underground fires have imperiled this vast property more than once, and it is believed that they were of incendiary origin. Whether or not rival copper companies are suspected of such a piratical

---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

method of curtailing the supply of metal is something you must guess for yourself.

This is the greatest fire risk in the world, and it is protected by a water main and telephone system underground, pumping stations and electric alarm systems. The company has lost several million dollars in fire, however, and is cautious to the point of acute suspicion. The elaborate system of fire protection was severely tested in 1890, when an alarm was turned in on Sunday night. There were only a few employees in the workings, and the fire had gained frightful headway before it was discovered. Then the burning area of the mine was shut off by closing a system of fireproof doors. The surface opening was sealed by covering the mouths of the shafts with heavy timbers, and tamping all the crevices with earth. Wherever gas escaped more earth was tamped and made solid with water. In three weeks the fire was smothered in this fashion, and other shafts were kept working without interruption. Fires in deep mines have burned for years, and the masterful system by which the Calumet and Hecla has been able to protect its property is in keeping with its resourceful enterprises in other directions. The layman is apt to wonder how a mine can be swept by a destructive fire. But in these vast labyrinths which Calumet and Hecla has driven beneath the earth there is more timber than goes into the buildings of many a pretentious and prosperous city. And if this mine were

---

## *The Greater America*

---

burned out there would be a direct loss of scores of millions of dollars and an indirect loss of hundreds of millions.

There is an impressive industrial community above ground in such an undertaking as this. There are sawmills and carpenter shops, smithies greater than can be found anywhere else except in the works of the most extensive manufacturers of machinery, with a hundred busy blacksmiths. Fifty tons of steel drill have to be sharpened every day, and an army of boys is needed to lug them between the shops and the mines. Warehouses and supply stations, a private railroad operating twenty miles of main track, a fleet of steamships, these and many other parts of this huge industrial organization are kept in motion by the copper ore that is hoisted from thousands of feet below the surface.

The active ruler of this lusty kingdom is James McNaughton, superintendent of the Calumet and Hecla mine. Five thousand men take orders from him, and he pays them six million dollars a year in wages. His story is one of those miracles that happen in this "land of opportunity." He was born in Ontario forty years ago, and left home to "hustle" for himself. At twelve years of age he was a water-boy on the Calumet and Hecla docks on the lake front. Between working hours he managed to peg away at school until he was fourteen. Then he became a switch-tender, and a year later was a stationary

---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

engineer, earning two dollars a day, and saving half of it toward an education.

At nineteen he entered Oberlin College, and began to think of becoming a mining engineer. By working during vacation he was able to take a two years' course at the University of Michigan. After graduation he obtained a position in the Boston offices of the Calumet and Hecla Company. From there he took a berth as a mining engineer at Iron Mountain, Michigan. At last, returning to the Calumet and Hecla, he fought his way to the top and was made superintendent five years ago.

Now mark you what the personal equation of one strong and able man can accomplish as soon as it find its field for action. Without reducing wages, or overworking his men, or curtailing any of the company's many philanthropic enterprises, McNaughton began to tighten up the screws for a higher efficiency. He has saved millions of dollars for his shareholders, and what his ability has amounted to may be perceived in the statement that he has cut the cost of milling the ore almost in half.

There is a somewhat prevalent impression that captains of industry are overpaid, that the army of toilers pay unfair tribute to those who control their labor. I do not know what salary the Calumet and Hecla Company pays James McNaughton, yet if he were given a hundred thousand dollars a year, not a miner in Calumet could object with fairness. For

---

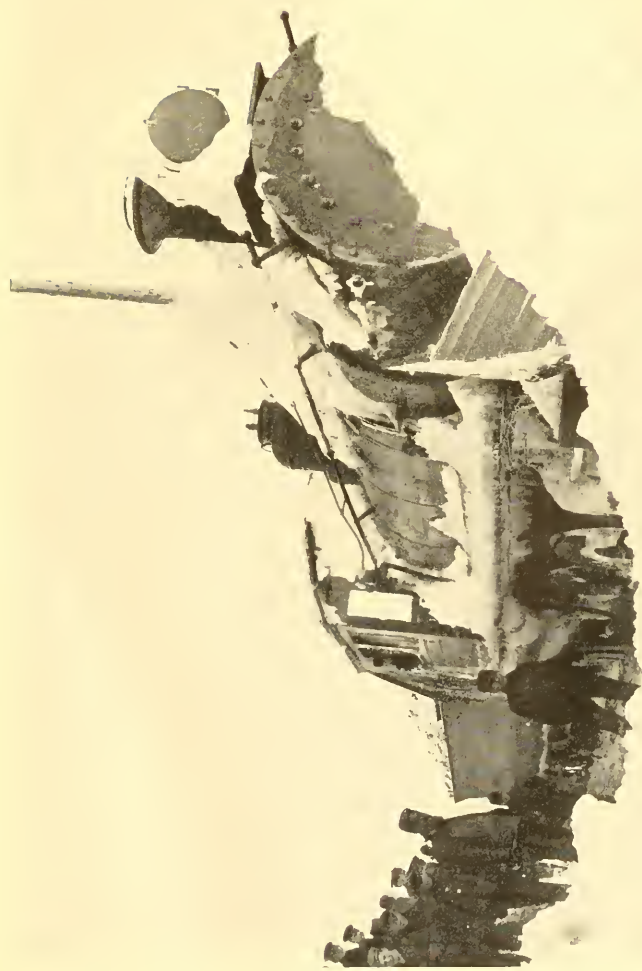
## *The Greater America*

---

every one of them is getting as good wages as ever, and is as generously treated by his employers, nor have any miners been deprived of their jobs. But because he has the brains and the backbone, McNaughton is able to create millions of dollars in industrial wealth with exactly the same tools which could not create this additional wealth in less competent hands.

The Michigan copper miner earns from sixty to seventy-five dollars a month, with steady employment the year around. With this he is able to have a home and pay his bills, to educate his children and protect his family if he is overtaken by sickness or death. Nor is he of a different class from the average immigrant who seeks this land from all quarters of Europe. The difference is in the environment and in the way he is handled and taught after he lands. His employers believe that he has something more due him than the right to exist and toil. They give him a chance to live like a man and he looks around him and sees a thousand homes owned outright by miners who began just as he is beginning, as strangers in a strange land, who have only their labor to sell. There are no labor unions among the miners of the Calumet region. The miners say they do not need them. They are satisfied with their wages and their living conditions, and they prefer to work the whole year through to being on strike for higher wages.

While there is not much of the picturesque in this mining region, it is a cheering American example of



*The railroad's difficulties in winter*





---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

what can be done with the problem of foreign immigration. Nor could this problem be more varied and vexatious than amid so great an assortment of tongues, customs and racial prejudices. The Calumet and Hecla Company appears to have gone a long way toward a solution by sticking to certain old-fashioned doctrines of fair play and honest appreciation of the bonds between capital and labor.

If you would see copper transformed from a dull and unlovely ore into something really beautiful, then follow it from the mine to the smelter. My pilgrimage to the Michigan copper country ended with a visit to a smelter near the town of Houghton, where the long ore-trains come trailing over the hills from the stamp mills which grind the fragments of ore to a powder that looks like coarse brown sugar. From the cars it is dumped into elevated bins, which shoot it into other cars that run across a trestle to the great furnaces, whose heat is twenty-three hundred degrees.

Here the ore must be purified as it melts, and the refiner dumps cord-wood into the glowing cauldron, and blows air through the mass to clean away the dross. At one end of the furnace is a trough, and, at the proper time, a gate is opened and the liquid copper floods out in a dazzling stream of gold. With a wonderful play of colored flames, of blue and crimson and violet, the liquid travels onward into ingot molds, which are set around the edge of a huge

wheel. On the hub of this wheel sits a man who rides this chariot of fire with amazing skill and indifference to his incandescent surroundings.

As the slowly revolving wheel brings one set of molds opposite the copper ladle, he fills them and they move on while others take their places. By the opposite rim of the wheel is another workman, who pries the cooling ingots from their molds as they pass him. This is pure, commercial copper, made while you wait, each ingot weighing forty-six pounds and worth six dollars in the metal market. Their color is bright red, shading off into tints of steel blue.

They are dumped into running water to cool off, and a most ingenious machine with steel fingers picks them up and lugs them up a dripping incline, over which they clatter and slide down on a platform, ready for the warehouse. Two strong men whose hands are protected by cloth pads pick them up and swing them on to cars until 30,000 pounds make the load. A squat electric locomotive, not as tall as the man who operates it, waits until a train of these cars is ready. Then it rattles away to the shed without fuss or effort.

Upon each of these little cars is piled \$4,500 worth of copper which has been transformed from the ore into the shining ingots while you have paused for a few minutes to watch the process. So swiftly wrought is this miracle, so deftly easy looks the process by which the turn of a wheel seems to create wealth

---

## *The Story of a Copper Mine*

---

before your eyes, that you are inclined to number copper among the precious metals.

No more than six or seven men have been busied in this whole operation, yet in one good working day they will turn out two hundred thousand pounds of copper ingots, which are worth thirty thousand dollars. This crew once made a world's record of a week's production of more than a million pounds of copper, worth one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. The daily charge of two hundred thousand pounds is smelted in five or six hours. It is a most fascinating mining exhibit, without fuss, dirt or discomfort, with no uproar and no foul air.

After seeing the mining region beyond the hills, and watching the smelting, you begin to think that a copper mine may be as worth while owning as a gold mine in Alaska. But while the profits of the Calumet and Hecla mine are so dazzling and enviable, nobody will begrudge them as long as these communities of mining folk up among the woods and fields of Michigan are being made good Americans in the smelter of an honest corporation's sense of responsibility for the thousands of men, women and children whom wealth and power have committed to its keeping.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONFUSION OF A PROPHET

A FEW years ago the Board of Trade of Duluth, with the spirit of the true Western "booster," printed in pamphlet form that speech by Proctor Knott which immortalized the "Zenith City of the Unsalted Seas." Through the original text were scattered up-to-date comments which show how poor a prophet a senatorial orator could be only thirty-five years ago. As throwing light across the path of progress of this city at the head of the Great Lakes, the following oratorical extracts and the present-day reflections of the Board of Trade, inserted in italics, are as effective as pages of description of this typical western city of the twentieth century.

"Years ago," sonorously proclaimed Proctor Knott, "when I first heard that there was somewhere in the vast terra incognita, somewhere in the bleak regions of the Northwest, a stream of water known to the nomadic inhabitants as the river St. Croix, I became satisfied that the construction of a railroad from the raging torrent [*water-power of St. Louis River adjoining Duluth, 65,000 horse power*] to some point in the civilized world was essential to the happiness and prosperity of the American people, if not absolutely indispensable to the

---

## *The Confusion of a Prophet*

---

perpetuity of Republican institutions on this continent. (Great laughter.) I felt instinctively that the boundless resources of that prolific region of sand and pine shrubbery would never be fully developed without a railroad constructed and equipped at the expense of the government, and perhaps not then. (Laughter.) [*Number of lines of railroads entering Duluth, eleven.*]

“ . . . Now, sir, who, after listening to this emphatic and unequivocal testimony of intelligent, competent and able-bodied witnesses, will doubt (laughter), who, that is not as incredulous as St. Thomas himself, will doubt for a moment that the Goshen of America will be found in the valleys and upon the pine-clad hills of the St. Croix? Who will have the hardihood to rise in his seat on this floor and assert that, excepting the pine bushes, the entire region would not produce enough vegetation in ten years to fatten a grasshopper? (Great laughter.) [*Estimated amount of standing pine timber tributary to Duluth, 30,000,000 feet. Bankers in Duluth estimate that it will take a hundred and thirty million dollars to move the wheat crop tributary to Duluth in 1903.*]

“ But above all, sir, let me implore you to reflect for a moment on the deplorable condition of our country in case of a foreign war, with all our ports blockaded, all our cities in a state of siege, the gaunt specter of famine brooding like a hungry vulture

---

## *The Greater America*

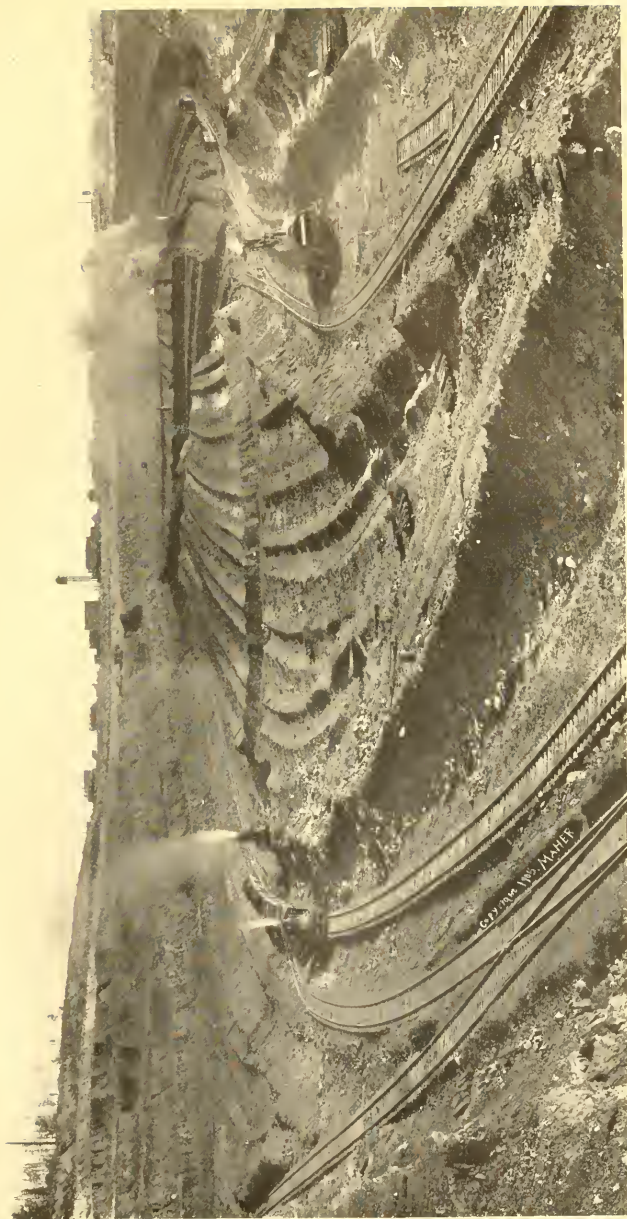
---

over our starving land, our commissary stores all exhausted, our famished armies withering away in the field, our navy rotting in the docks, a helpless prey to the insatiate demon of hunger, and we without any railroad communication whatever with the prolific pine thicket of the St. Croix! [*One hundred million bushels of wheat raised along the Great Northern Railway tributary to Duluth in 1903.*]

“As I have said, sir, I was utterly at a loss to determine where the terminus of this great and indispensable railroad should be until I accidentally overheard a gentleman mention the name of Duluth. Duluth! The word fell upon my ear with a peculiar and indescribable charm. Duluth! 'Twas the name for which my soul had panted for years, as a hart panteth for the water brooks. But where was Duluth? Never in my limited reading had my vision been gladdened by seeing the celestial word in print. I rushed to my library and examined all the maps I could find. I discovered in one of them a delicate, hairlike line diverging from the Mississippi, which I supposed was intended to represent the river St. Croix, but nowhere could I find Duluth. Nevertheless I was confident that it existed somewhere and that its discovery would constitute the crowning glory of the present century. (Renewed laughter.) [*Population of Duluth in 1906, 80,000.*]

“In fact, sir, I was overwhelmed with the conviction that Duluth not only existed somewhere, but





*" This piece of country has surely been torn to a frazzle "*





---

## *The Confusion of a Prophet*

---

that wherever it was, it was a great and glorious place. [*Railroad lines tributary to Duluth, twenty-five thousand miles.*]

“I have been told by gentlemen who have been so reckless of their personal safety as to venture away in those awful regions where Duluth is supposed to be that it is so exactly in the center of the visible universe that the sky comes down at precisely the same distance all around it. It is alleged to be situated somewhere near the western end of Lake Superior. [*Arrivals and clearances of vessels in 1903, 10,525, registered tonnage, 20,905,251.*]

“I really cannot tell whether it is one of those ethereal creations of intellectual frost-work, one of those airy exhalations of the speculator's brain, which I am told are ever flitting in the form of towns and cities along the lines of railroads built with government subsidies, or whether it was a real bona fide, substantial city, all staked off, with the lots marked with their owners' names, like that proud commercial metropolis recently discovered on the desirable shores of San Domingo. (Laughter.) [*Taxable valuation of Duluth property in 1903, twenty-eight million dollars.*]

“As to the commercial resources of Duluth, sir, they are simply illimitable and inexhaustible as shown by this map. [*Bank capital, three million dollars.*]

“. . . I see stated here that there is a vast

---

## *The Greater America*

---

scope of territory embracing an area of over three million square miles, rich in every element of material wealth and commercial prosperity, all tributary to Duluth. Here are inexhaustible mines of gold, immeasurable veins of silver, impenetrable depths of boundless forest, wide extended plains of richest pasturage all embraced in this vast territory, which must, in the very nature of things, empty the untold treasures of its commerce into the lap of Duluth. (Laughter.) [*Iron ore shipped from Duluth district in 1903, 13,000,000 tons. Total cut of lumber, one billion feet. Receipts of coal at head of Lake Superior, four million tons. Receipts of wheat, flaxseed, barley and oats, 63,000,000 bushels.*]

“I was about remarking, sir, upon these vast ‘wheat fields’ represented on this map [*Duluth’s elevator capacity, 35,000,000 bushels*] in the immediate neighborhood of the buffaloes and the Piegans and was about to say that the idea of there being these immense wheat fields in the very heart of a wilderness, hundreds and hundreds of miles beyond the utmost verge of civilization, may appear to some gentlemen rather incongruous—as rather too great a strain on the rivets of veracity. [*Capacity of flour mills in 1894, 21,100 barrels per day; flour shipments, 6,176,113 barrels.*] But, to my mind, there is no difficulty in the matter whatever. The phenomenon is very easily accounted for. It is evident, sir, that the Piegans sowed that wheat there and plowed it with

---

## *The Confusion of a Prophet*

---

buffalo bulls. (Great laughter.) Now, sir, this fortunate combination of buffaloes and Piegans, considering their relative positions to each other and to Duluth, as they are arranged on this map, satisfies me that Duluth is destined to be the beef market of the world. Here you will observe [pointing to the map] are the buffaloes, directly between the Piegans and Duluth; and here, right on the road to Duluth are the Creeks. Now, sir, when the buffaloes are sufficiently fat from grazing on these immense wheat fields, you will see it will be the easiest thing in the world for the Piegans to drive them on down, stay all night with their friends the Creeks, and go into Duluth in the morning. I think I see them now, sir, a vast herd of buffaloes, with their heads down, their eyes glaring, their nostrils dilated, their tongues out and their tails curled over their backs, tearing along toward Duluth, with about a thousand Piegans on their grass-bellied ponies, yelling at their heels."

A generation later than this prophetic utterance the long ore and grain steamers were swarming in squadrons to their docks at Duluth and Superior, or departing loaded to the hatches; and by night their whistles sounded a clamorous chorus that was singularly eloquent of the wonderful commerce of which they were the links between the mines and the prairie to the westward and the mills to the eastward of them. The smoke-bannered chimneys of Pittsburg were waiting for them, and their freightage must

be fashioned into the steel that is the sinews of prosperity.

The mines of the Mesabi Range are a little way distant from Duluth, up among the pine-lands of Minnesota, and I sought them to see the most wonderful deposit ever uncovered on the globe. The railroad out of Duluth into the iron country plunged into a pioneer landscape of tiny towns girt about by forest. Most of the houses and barns were built of logs. The lumberman was at work in these vast unkempt tracts of charred stump-land, wilderness clearing and tracts of standing pine. It was still a bold, rude corner of the Northwest, into which the settler was slowly following the lumberman and the miner.

The iron country could not be mistaken for anything else in the first glimpse of it. I came at length to the town of Hibbing, which was set down in the midst of so amazingly devastated a landscape that it appeared to have been plowed, tossed up and excavated by earthquakes and tornadoes, working hand in hand.

Nothing more unlike the clean and rural aspect of the Superior copper country could be imagined. This looked more like an industrial inferno, for all the mines were on top of the ground. As a traveler on the train observed:

“This piece of country has surely been torn to a frazzle.”

---

## *The Confusion of a Prophet*

---

The explanation of the chaos was that the ore beds were so amazingly rich that steam shovels instead of miners' picks simply scooped off the surface of the earth and loaded it into cars which bore it swiftly to Duluth and dumped it into the open holds of the steamers at the gravity docks. Ore which had lain undisturbed for countless ages was scooped up in this fashion, carried to the vessels, borne down the lake and shoveled into the Pittsburg furnaces, to be fashioned into rails and billets in less than a week's time.

I walked along the main street of Hibbing and faced on the outskirts of the town a series of great gray mountains of earth which had been stripped from the surface by the steam shovels so that they could bite into the ore just beneath. Everywhere were these puffing steam shovels at work, digging their way deeper into the open craters they had made, moving along the strips of railroad track that were laid for their convenience.

These railroad lines were laid down to-day and ripped up to-morrow, and yet long trains of ore-laden cars drawn by huge freight engines were puffing along them, ascending from open pits that were like pictures of volcanic destruction. The nearest mine looked to be half a mile deep and a mile wide, so impressive was it to come upon this immense hole in the ground which upset all previous notions of mining methods and backgrounds. Far below the steam shovels were toiling like so many ants, their

---

## *The Greater America*

---

white puffs of vapor rising like breath on a frosty morning. They were attacking the brown dust with marvelous and furious activity, taking five tons of ore at one bite and spitting it into the car beside them.

One of these infernally energetic monsters, with a crew of only five men, was mining ore, sixty-five per cent. pure iron, at the rate of three thousand tons a day. In one day's work a handful of men in one of these mines was getting out enough ore to fill the hold of a twelve-thousand ton lake steamer.

Thirty million tons of ore were scooped from this tract in the working season of two years ago, and hundreds of acres of as rich beds as these were being drilled and prospected before their blankets of pine woodlands and underbrush should be ripped off to expose their marvelous treasure. More than a hundred million dollars' worth of iron ore was being dug out from this tract in a single year, a tide of reddish-brown dust which was transmuted by one of the most astounding of modern miracles into sky-scrapers and railroads, machinery and locomotives as fast as it could be hurried down the Lakes.



*Scooping up the rich ore from the earth's surface*





## CHAPTER V

### THE PEOPLING OF THE PRAIRIE

THERE are two centuries in time and two thousand miles in distance between the New England village and the stretch of North Dakota prairie on which I found the newest manifestation of the vital spirit of a pioneering nation. In an expanse of country larger than many Eastern States, it was possible to see unfolding, like a panorama, such a movement of population as settled first the Atlantic States and later the Middle West. As I saw this North Dakota prairie in the autumn, it was a cross section of American history in the making.

Into this great new wheat belt that stretched north to the Canadian boundary had come thousands of home seekers, not from the overcrowded East, but from Iowa and Kansas, Nebraska, Michigan and Missouri. They had come to till millions of acres that had never felt a plow, to make new towns, to redeem the empty places, as their fathers had done when they trailed across the Mississippi from the eastward, before the railroad came.

The railroad!—this was the magic key that unlocked this newest country. It was early morning when I joined the construction train of the latest railroad to reach up into this thinly peopled vastness of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

American soil. Air that sparkled, a cloudless sky, and miles upon miles of brown, grass-carpeted prairie that lay flat as a lake to the horizon, made the swarming streets of Eastern cities seem a world away.

Here was the firing line of American civilization. North and east and west the prairie was almost as empty as the sea. But instead of lonely vessels against the sky line there were here and there, miles apart, the low sod houses and shacks of the "homesteaders" who had come into this country ahead of the railroad. These pioneers had been waiting to be linked with the world beyond, meanwhile hauling their wheat fifty or eighty miles to the nearest town, suffering hardships, in privation and loneliness, to compare with those of the men and women who settled New England. They had been led here inspired by that dearest of incentives to American courage and endurance—the ownership of home and land.

Now, at length, the railroad was marching toward them at the splendid gait of two miles a day. The hundreds of laborers who were flinging the track across the prairie had no time to think of ultimate results. Upon the raw, new grade that ran straight as an arrow into the lonely north, the track-laying machine was feeding out rails as fast as they could be "bridled," bolted, spiked, and thrown into line. "Wrenchers" and "heelers," "spikers," "peddlers" and "iron men" were busy as so many ants, and every little while a brakeman perched aloft on a

---

## *The Confusion of a Prophet*

---

platform above the "pioneer car" flourished an arm. The engineer nodded from his cab window, "gave her a little steam," and the train was shoved ahead over the track it had just laid.

Charley Ffolliet, the contractor in command, sauntered to and fro with a specious air of leisure, but it was to be noticed that his foremen and their "straw bosses," or assistants, did not appear to be loafing. System, order, energy were driving full-speed ahead, without waste, flurry or lost motion. This stocky, smiling North of Ireland man, Ffolliet, had built thousands of miles of railroad through the Northwest. He had hewn ledges for his track to cling to in the heart of the Cascades and the Rockies, where the sheer drop was a half mile, and had twisted the ribbons of steel around corners and through passes where only the mountain sheep and the surveying outfit had found footing.

There seemed to be no place for sentiment in this headlong drive of men and machinery, but the construction boss was reminded of a story during his brief dinner hour and it threw an odd bit of very human feeling into this rude business of railroad building.

"I once had a foreman named 'Dirty Face' Charley," said Ffolliet, "and he was a hard-working, close-mouthed kind of a slob without a streak of sentiment in him as far as you could see with the naked eye. His only close friend was his partner

---

## *The Greater America*

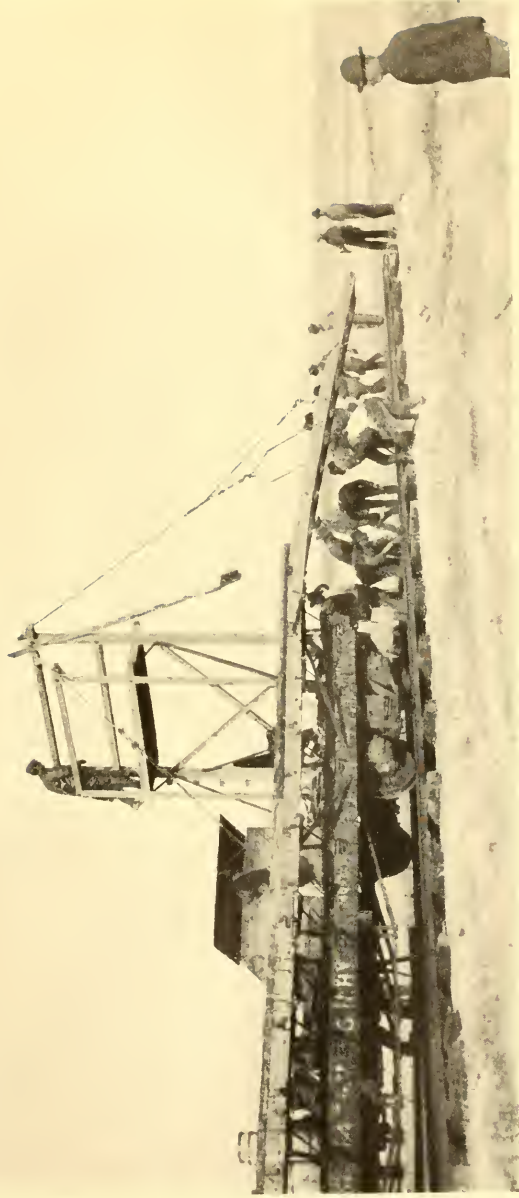
---

or bunkie, and these two used to get drunk together and fight for each other and run a close corporation generally. One day the partner up and died while we were laying a stretch of track across the prairie like that yonder. There was no town within twenty miles, and the country was too new to have a cemetery within a hundred miles. 'Dirty Face' Charley came to me and asked for the loan of a couple of men to help dig his partner's grave. I ordered two Italian hands from the grading gang to go with him, but this wouldn't do at all. The tears were rolling down Charley's face as he turned back to me and blubbered:

" 'You mean well, and I'm obliged to you, Mr. Ffolliet, but no blankey-blankety-blank Dagoes can dig Jim's grave. If you'll give me a half day off, I'll dig it lone-handed.' "

"We bosses turned to with shovels, for there was no withstanding such loyalty as this, and Jim was buried by what Charley called 'white men.' "

This prairie construction was like a holiday task, a diversion in railroad making for Ffolliet, and yet he was driving his men and trains as fast as material could be handled. It was not easy to see why there should be so much haste to cross this almost empty prairie. Where were the people, where was the freight to make it worth while? There was no terminal city nor any trunk line beyond. A few miles more and the work of the construction gangs would be done. They would double back over their



*"The railroad was marching . . . two miles a day"*



---

## *The Peopling of the Prairie*

---

track, leaving the road to end on just such a brown and monotonous stretch of prairie as this.

The answer to this riddle lay in the wake of the construction train. Only a few hundred yards behind the track-layers there was a town, Sarles by name. It was not yet a month old. A bank was open for business. Grocery and hardware stores, the post-office, and a hotel, unpainted and crude, were humming with activity, hope and industry. Grain elevators were climbing skyward as fast as men could be found to use hammer and saw. A lumber yard was crowded with teams hauling material for more banks and stores and warehouses. You could not have found a busier town than Sarles in the United States.

And yet there seemed no more excuse for the town than for the railroad. Within sight of Sarles the prairie held perhaps a half dozen farm-houses as far as one could see. But across the country were crawling four-horse wagons from all quarters of the compass. These were the "grain tanks" of the farmers, hauling their wheat to the railroad, coming into Sarles to sell their harvest to the elevator men, to cash their checks in the bank of Sarles, to spend their money in its stores. The few acres upon which this town had sprung up in a matter of days had already become a distributing business and shipping center for a wheat-growing country perhaps thirty miles square. The railroad had no need to bid for traffic. It was

---

## *The Greater America*

---

paying for itself as fast as the rails were laid. It was like the flood from a bursting dam, this building and settling behind the construction train. Sarles was one of three towns in twenty miles, looking alike as so many peas in a pod, differing in size according to their several ages of from one to three months.

This stretch of railroad was one of five Great Northern extensions flung up into a belt of new country two hundred miles long, within the last three years. They reach out like the teeth of a comb toward the Canadian boundary, thirty to fifty miles between them, as instruments by which this territory is being dotted with towns, many of them future cities. If you care to see how the thing is done, let us go up forty miles to the end of another of these extensions. Here is the town of Antler. The railroad came to it about three weeks ago, therefore Antler can be conservatively called one month old. Its founders began to build even ahead of the railroad, and they lived in tents until lumber could be hauled to them over the new track.

Four weeks in the life of an Eastern town is but a day. The man who leaves it for a month returns to find the main street looking as he left it, and he would be immensely surprised to find any changes worth his notice. But the man of North Dakota who drove to Antler a month ago would have found a railroad grade waiting for the rails, and a patch of brown prairie, with nothing to indicate that this



---

## *The Peopling of the Prairie*

---

area would not be plowed for wheat this year. Visiting the site of Antler a month later, he finds three lumber yards, two banks (two banks, mind you), a drug store, two restaurants, a livery stable, two general stores, five grain elevators finished and one building, and men hammering and digging and hauling by night as well as day.

The town has grown faster than the railroad can keep pace with it, and the station is not yet built. On a siding stands a box car with a flight of wooden steps leading up to its side door, and a stove-pipe poked through the roof. An alert and capable young woman reigns within as station and express agent and telegraph operator. She has even fenced off one corner of the car near the stove as a "waiting-room." It is such an insignificant looking makeshift of a station and the town is so incredibly new that the information she bestows in reply to your questions is staggering:

"In the first two weeks the station was opened, the freight receipts at Antler were ten thousand dollars. This is big, if you happen to know that three hundred dollars' worth of business a month justified the company in building a station and putting in a salaried agent. The country looks kind of empty to a stranger, doesn't it? There doesn't look to be much of anything besides Antler on this part of the map. And Antler isn't what you would call a metropolis back east in Michigan where I was raised. But

---

## *The Greater America*

---

this little, brand-new town will ship out a million bushels of wheat this fall. That means nearly seven hundred thousand dollars in cash coming in to these farmers around here, and most of it spent right here in Antler. And that pays for a good many miles of track over this flat country. Oh, we are doing pretty well, thank you."

A salesman for a St. Paul hardware house comes in to find out when he may expect to get some shipments into the town.

"I've driven three hundred miles across lots in the last six days," he confides. "I crossed four of these new railroad extensions, and struck fourteen of these towns made while you wait. Found them all the way from a week to a year old. I slept in a hotel only one night, because everybody was so busy building stores and elevators that they couldn't stop to put up hotels. I sold ten thousand dollars' worth of stoves in the six days. Five thousand dollars' worth was ordered by men in the new towns who haven't built their stores yet. They expect to have the stores up by the time the stoves get there."

What is known as the Thorne extension is typical of this amazingly new and lusty civilization. Thirty miles of road had been finished in July. I went over it early in September, six weeks after the railroad opened this wheat-raising prairie, six weeks after the first town was begun. Three towns were already in a white heat of activity. McCumber had risen from

---

## *The Peopling of the Prairie*

---

the prairie twenty-five days before I saw it. A two-story bank block loomed grandly in the foreground, flanked by stores and elevators. Only a third of a mile away was a rival city in embryo, Rolette, also sprouting buildings from the prairie grass with incredible rapidity. While the Great Northern was hurrying its branch roads north and south, the "Soo" Line was cutting this territory east and west, in a stirring race against time for a share of the year's wheat harvest. A crossing of the two roads happened to fall between McCumber and Rolette. The former was the "Great Northern town," the latter the "Soo town."

Municipal expansion will inevitably cause the suburbs of one to collide with the outskirts of the other. The unbiased observer would conclude that there was no room for both infants. But it would not be safe to suggest this to a man of McCumber unless you picked Rolette as the probable victim. The two towns sat side by side on the prairie, crowing at each other like two very young bantam roosters. For spirit they were St. Paul and Minneapolis in miniature. They have seen other towns, started under similar conditions, wax rich in people and wealth. They can go back into history, for example, and talk about the comparatively ancient town of Cando, on a neighboring extension. In a recent spring season forty automobiles were shipped into Cando, bought by the farmers in the near-by country,

---

## *The Greater America*

---

half of them thirty horse-power machines. Cando has thirteen hundred people, and is as prosperous as the automobile market indicates.

These towns come into being because the West is full of men who are always on the *qui vive* for new opportunities to create, to produce, to make a town where none grew before. As the railroad invades the virgin territory, the towns spring up according to a general plan that smacks of a problem in geometry. There are no rivers, no forests, no mines, nothing to make for advantages of location. There is no obvious reason why a town should be here instead of there, a few miles beyond or a few miles back.

The farmer ought to be able to haul his wheat not more than ten miles to the elevator. Therefore the town site is mapped out to draw upon a certain wheat-raising radius. And beyond that radius another town is projected, like placing checkers on certain squares on the board.

The town is even announced before it happens. The railroad issues such statements as these:

"This extension will run forty-two miles from York, northwest through the Island Lake country, and *will have five good North Dakota towns*. The stations on the line will be well equipped with elevators, and will be constructed and ready for operation at the commencement of the grain season. Prospective merchants have been active in securing desirable locations at the different towns on the line. There

---

## *The Peopling of the Prairie*

---

are still opportunities for hotels, general merchandise, hardware, furniture and drug stores, etc."

Such is the spirit of American enterprise, which builds its towns on paper before the railroad track has been laid past their sites.

I traveled a thousand miles up and down these Great Northern extensions visiting thirty-one towns in their swaddling clothes, and found every one of them ablaze with confidence that it was certain to surpass in population and prosperity all of its sister infants. In their main essentials, they were bewilderingly alike. There was the main business street laid out like a boulevard for width, vastly expensive to pave whenever that step in development should be reached. There had not been time to build "residence sections" in most of them. The workers lived in the hotel or over their stores, and the few dwellings clung close to the clustered beginnings of the town, as if reluctant to scatter over the bare and wind-swept prairie.

One of the hardships of living in these new settlements is the lack of good water. To the towns which spring up over night the tank wagons trail from miles away to supply enough water for drinking. A locomotive is the thirstiest brute in all creation, and millions of gallons a day must be supplied along these pioneer railroad extensions. It is superfluous to remark that for absence of superstitious and sentimental nonsense of all kinds a great railway corporation

is almost in a class by itself. If a silly or unfounded romance is afloat, it is not likely to find a welcome refuge in the practical headpiece of a general manager.

It was, therefore, rather startling to fall in with an elderly and dignified gentleman, a conductor of many years' service on this system, who had been detailed on special duty from the General Manager's office to search for water supplies with the aid of a divining rod or "water-witching" outfit. It may be that his errand was in the nature of a cheerful gamble after other resources had failed, but the fact remained that Mr. Eastman was on the ground equipped for business, and that our train waited upon his investigations.

His outfit was simple. A friend, acting as assistant "witcher," carried a bundle of freshly cut witch-hazel boughs, trimmed in V-shaped branches, the leaves and buds still on them. The two men disembarked. From up the raw, new street of the town that was not more than a month old, gathered a score of merchants, farmers and idlers. They greeted the visitors with interest and respect. This looking for water touched upon a vital matter in their daily lives. They were still hauling their drinking water in tank wagons from a spring a mile out of town, and the water was sold at so much a gallon.

Mr. Eastman, stout, conventional as to dress, and looking as essentially practical as a veteran railroad man ought to appear, took one of the V-shaped





*A prairie water wagon*



*The water-witcher at work*





---

## *The Peopling of the Prairie*

---

witch-hazel boughs, and tightly grasped the pliant ends in his two fists, holding the crotch or point upright. Thus equipped he moved sedately across the prairie. The witch-hazel remained upright for perhaps fifty feet. The crowd trailed in behind, vastly curious. Presently the bough began to turn, or waver. The inverted V twisted slowly down until it was parallel with the earth, or pointing straight out from the bearer.

He slackened his gait and moved ahead, while the telltale bough moved slowly down until it was pointing toward the soil. Now the "water-witcher" had it so grasped that it was twisting in his fists, and the tender bark along the pliant ends was beginning to break, showing that some force other than muscular effort was pulling the bough toward the earth. When it pointed straight down he stopped and heeled a mark in the grass.

Then he moved on, and very slowly the branch began to rise, until at length it had returned to the perpendicular, in its original position. The vein of water had been passed, and the witch-hazel was no longer attracted.

"There is your water back there," said Mr. Eastman, with the air of a man who is backing a "sure thing." When asked to explain he said:

"Whatever kind of attraction there may be, I know it is there. I have located fifty wells along the railway without failure. I picked it up when I was

a boy of thirteen, by watching an old, blind negro 'witch' for water on my father's farm. Not every one can succeed at it. There must be something in the theory of a magnetic current flowing between the operator and the hidden water through the medium of the green willow or the witch-hazel. I can't explain it, any more than I can tell you why one man succeeds at 'water-witching' and another fails.

"I have located a flowing well alongside five dry wells that had been located in the ordinary fashion. I must have found nearly five hundred good wells in the Dakotas, Montana and Idaho in the last twenty-five years. There isn't anything in it for me, and I have no reason for trying any bunco games.

"Do I voluntarily twist the twigs? Not on your life. Grip one end, next my hand, and see if you can keep it from twisting, or take one end by yourself as we go back.

"There, what did I tell you? Of course it twists of itself. Why, I have had my hands blister from the force with which the twigs pull down when there is water close to the surface. After you have located water, you must walk away from it until the twigs are upright again. The distance between the location and this other point will give you a rough estimate of the number of feet in depth you must dig before you are likely to strike water."

Now there is this to be said of Mr. Eastman: Not only does Mr. James J. Hill's railroad think it

---

## *The Peopling of the Prairie*

---

worth while to go "water-witching," but their "water-witcher" is not the kind of a man who can be accused of any mushy sentimentality. He is gray-bearded and elderly, and there is something almost patriarchal in his aspect. But appearances were never more deceitful. For as a Great Northern conductor he has been for years noted as the most sudden and valiant person to look out for the interests of the road when trouble is brewing on large consignments aboard a passenger train.

It is still his delight to welcome to his train a carload of Minnesota "lumber-jacks," just come out of the woods, full of bad whisky and violent purposes. Mr. Eastman has made a habit of wading through such storm centers with a fighting "lumber-jack" hanging to every corner of his frame. It is in the interests of peace and order on the train; the "scrapers" invariably "hit the gravel" when Mr. Eastman is done with them. It would be absurd to accuse such a hard-headed and hard-fisted railroad veteran as this of harboring a "stray superstition" for no obvious purpose.

There were no saloons in this prairie belt, for North Dakota is under the sway of a prohibition law. Whereas the saloon is the pioneer enterprise in the mining camp, the bank took the lead in this wholesome kind of creation. There were towns with a dozen stores, four hundred people and three banks. In fact, the nucleus of such a town is a group of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

elevators, the "general store," and the bank. There was one town, Munich, whose history ran back some twelve months, in which three of the four corners of one block on the main street were occupied by banks. It is an upside down condition of pioneer settlement when banks are so amazingly numerous and saloons so conspicuously missing.

Of course, the newspaper came arm in arm with the country banker. At Mohall, I met the editor of *The Tribune*, a flourishing weekly with nothing "countrified" in its make-up. He would not have exchanged positions with the owner of the *New York Herald*. He was growing up with the country and he had come in "on the ground floor."

"You think it's a little early to be running a newspaper up here?" he said. "Why, I had two papers going before the railroad got here, one in this town, and another at Sherwood. We don't wait for the railroad. It has to hustle to keep up with us folks. When the extension got to Sherwood, it found the town built, doing business and waiting for it."

These towns in their infancy, rising by scores on the prairie, were essentially American in their spirit, their purposes and their destinies. They were being peopled not by foreign immigrants, but by the men and women of the Middle West who were not afraid to "take chances." The schoolhouse and the church would follow the grain elevator, the bank and the crude, new "main street" which ran into a trail

---

## *The Peopling of the Prairie*

---

across the blank prairie. Some of these towns may collapse and vanish, but most of them will grow into solidity and lose their raw edges. For the brick and stone business block and high school, the pavement, the water-works and lighting plant are only a year or two behind the pioneer in such a movement as this.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MAGNET OF THE WHEAT

WHEAT is the magnet that drew these people and that created these towns as if by magic. I had only to step into the middle of the main street of one of these towns to see on the prairie beyond the smoke of the threshing outfits, far and near. As they moved slowly across the landscape or spouted the golden straw, they suggested so many twentieth century dragons of a benevolent temperament. By day the smoke and turmoil of the threshers, by night the blaze of burning straw stacks—the infant towns were ringed around with the signs of the riches that create the need for them.

The railroad was fairly blocked with cars crammed with wheat. Seventy-five acres of wheat, twenty bushels to the acre, were swept into one of these cars, and one huge engine hauled to market seventy-five of these carloads. Therefore one of these trains, which fairly trod on one another's heels through the autumn, contained the harvest from 5,625 acres. Herein was the secret of this wonderful building development.

Ahead of the town came the pioneer wheat-raiser who made the town possible. Now a population

---

## *The Magnet of the Wheat*

---

cannot be picked up bodily and transplanted like so many heads of cabbage. It must be led to move into new regions, to sever the ties that bind it to old homes, kinsfolk, old friends, to the very soil and landscape it has always known. In the one decade beginning with 1894, one hundred thousand people were persuaded to forsake the lands that bore them, and to make new homes that brought under cultivation eight million acres of prairie land that had belonged to the Indian and the buffalo, and after them to the cattleman. This movement is a fine, big American story in itself.

James J. Hill is the greatest of living empire-builders. Stretching a railroad across the continent was only one end of the task he blocked out for himself. His railroad was worthless without a population. Therefore he became the leader of a migration which has been carried on so quietly that it is impressive only when the statistics are bulked in this fashion. These hundred thousand men, women and children led up toward the northern frontier were not sought in the steerages of Atlantic steamers. This was not a foreign movement such as in a previous generation had settled large areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin. The missionaries who preached the gospel of "Jim" Hill went into the Virginias, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Nebraska.

From the eastern view-point these States and sections are far from being over-crowded. Yet they

---

## *The Greater America*

---

have largely peopled this part of the new northwest, while at the same time they have steadily increased their own wealth and population. In other words, while there has been no economic loss to the older States, there has been a splendid gain to the nation, which is bigger and better and stronger because energy and industry have found new fields to conquer.

Twenty-four years ago the Great Northern carried only two hundred and fifty-eight thousand bushels of wheat from harvest in this north country. In 1905 it hauled one hundred million bushels of wheat, oats, barley and flax out of its own territory. Much of this tremendously increased contribution to the wealth of the country was made by the great army of stout-hearted pilgrims from the older States.

These people were seemingly rooted in their native soil, on the farm, in the shop and the store, struggling perhaps, but always hoping for better fortune, expecting to end their days where they were. Among them came the agents of a railroad that was crying for strong men and farms and towns. These strangers had no land for sale. Therefore they did not color the facts. They did not want weak-kneed failures chronically incapable of bettering themselves. In school and court houses, in country halls and cross-road post-offices, from dry-goods boxes, in town squares and at political rallies, from valley to hilltop, these crusaders talked and lectured of "the land of opportunity" in the northern half of North Dakota,





*The low sod house of the homesteader*



*Sprouting buildings from the prairie grow with inconceivable rapidity*



---

## *The Magnet of the Wheat*

---

in Minnesota and Montana. It was a campaign of several years, waged with a common-sense intelligence. Its arguments were of a straight-from-the-shoulder, American kind. Their tenor was like this:

“You see your children come out of school with no chance to get farms of their own, because the cost of land in your older part of the country is so high that you can’t afford to buy land to start your sons out in life around you. They have to go to the cities to make a living, or become laborers in the mills or hire out as farm-hands. There is no future for them here. If you are doing well where you are and can safeguard the future of your children, and see them prosper around you, don’t leave here. But if you want independence, if you are renting your land, if the money-lender is carrying you along and you are running behind year after year, you can do no worse by moving. Just say to yourself:

“‘Here goes nothing. Things cannot be any worse up there. Maybe there is something better in store for me.’

“Every man who moves upon North Dakota can have a half mile square of rich land, one hundred and sixty acres, which is his own little kingdom. It will increase in value as the country settles around him. In a few years his homestead is worth several thousand dollars. He is his own master, he is making a living, and he can look every man in the eye and tell him to go to hell.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

“ You farmers talk of free trade and protection and what this or that political party will do for you. Why don't you vote a homestead for yourself? That is the only thing Uncle Sam will ever give you. Jim Hill hasn't an acre of land to sell you. We are not in the real-estate business. We don't want you to go up there and make a failure of it, because the rates at which we haul you and your goods make the first transaction a loss. It is a case of fair play and co-operation. We must have landless men for a manless land.”

You may be sure there was much earnest discussion through the countryside, much reading of railroad literature in long winter evenings, much wagging of gray beards while these arguments were threshed out. At length a few heads of families, men esteemed for truth and good judgment in their communities, would be sent up to spy out the land. They found that it was good, and sent for their women folk. In the winter these pioneers, whose pockets were bulging with the cash received for their first wheat crop, visited their old homes and talked over the new country by the firesides and in the corner stores.

The snowball was set rolling. It swelled into a “concentration movement.” This meant nothing less than sending home-seekers northward by the train-load. If home is the word most freighted with emotions to stir the heart, then “home-seeker” becomes a phrase with more power than all others to kindle

---

## *The Magnet of the Wheat*

---

the imagination of an American. It holds within itself the history of the nation's creation and growth.

Successor in direct line to the ox teams and the prairie schooner of the Overland Trail, these railroad trains were carrying into another century the story of the pioneers. In 1894 the first wave of this so-called "concentration" tide flowed out from Indiana. Fourteen passenger coaches were filled with men, women and children, and forty-five freight cars carried their household goods and live stock. In the spring of 1898 more than five thousand people were moved in March and April as part of this movement. The tide of migration rose steadily higher, until five years later one party assembled at Chicago numbered two thousand eight hundred souls, mostly farmers and their families from the Middle West. They moved to North Dakota in five long passenger trains, and six freight trains were filled with their goods. In 1900 a large party was taken out of the Shenandoah Valley, which for generations has been famed as a rich and fruitful farming section.

Now these people of American birth had left their farms and their homes to begin life over again; wives and mothers, old men and young, sweethearts and babies, a thousand miles from their own country. From old and settled communities they were going into a land that a generation ago was called unfit for habitation, scourged by drought and blizzards. General Sibley in 1863 wrote of North Dakota:

---

## *The Greater America*

---

"If the devil were to select a residence on earth, he would probably choose this particular district for his abode, with the redskins' murdering and plundering bands as his ready ministers."

Each family was permitted to take free of railroad charge ten head of live stock, together with its household goods and farming implements. When their trains trailed up into the new land the pilgrims were emptied into little towns just springing up, or dropped upon the bare and open prairie, one hundred here, two hundred there. Once a party of two thousand overflowed one village of four hundred people. The few settlers who had arrived before them drove in from many miles around and helped the newcomers as best they could. The freight cars were backed on sidings and used to sleep in until the immigrants could build their own homes. Every dwelling, store, church and schoolhouse within twenty miles was filled to overflowing with these families.

Within a week, however, the overflow had vanished from the little towns, and the freight cars on the prairie siding lost their lodgers. The immigrants brought their horses and farm wagons with them. As soon as their homestead claims were located and filed, they hauled out lumber to build shacks, or with the help of neighbors made their sod houses. Then the "homesteader" loaded his family, his household goods and his farming tools into his wagon, and trailed out across the prairie to his new home. The

---

## *The Magnet of the Wheat*

---

day after he had put the house to rights he began to break the land for the spring sowing of wheat.

The prairie fairly seemed to swallow these thousands of settlers and to cry for more. No railroad extensions gridironed the country during this first stage of development. As homestead lands became scarcer, those who could not afford to buy land within twenty miles of the main line went on and on, and built their shacks as far as a hundred miles from the nearest town. Therefore when these migrating hosts moved out to find their "locations," it was like the departure of a great fleet of fishing boats that scatter over a smooth sea, then, one by one, drop hull down and vanish.

The loneliness and homesickness of the pioneers of these prairies is not a new story. What they suffered in Kansas and Nebraska, they fought through in this latest migration into North Dakota. They endured and conquered in the spirit that glows in every line of the following verses. They are better than any attempts at description, for the author, James J. Somers, of Renville, is a North Dakota man who lived the life whose trials he so vividly sings:

"I am one of the Pioneers  
Of North Dakota State.  
At Hill's request I came out West  
In search of real estate.  
I filed along the Cut Bank Creek,  
Just forty miles from rail ;

---

## *The Greater America*

---

And I started farming with a hoe  
Along the Minot trail.

“ The hardships that we did endure,  
From hunger and from cold,  
I haven't time to tell you,  
Or it never will be told.  
To start from Minot with a load  
And face a northwest gale,  
It would break your heart, right on the start,  
Along the Minot trail.

“ The rivers they were far apart,  
And a well was something new.  
It often tickled us to find  
Some water in a slough.  
I used to have a demijohn—  
I called it “ ginger-ale ”—  
Once in a while we'd take a smile  
Along the Minot trail.

“ The only fuel that we knew  
Was prairie hay and straw.  
From November until April  
We never had a thaw.  
I often thought I'd rather be  
In some good warm jail,  
While twisting hay both night and day  
Along the Minot trail.



---

## *The Magnet of the Wheat*

---

“ And when the snow would disappear  
    The gophers would begin.  
They’d eat up everything we sowed,  
    And then we’d sow again.  
If I could scheme some new device  
    To kill the flicker-tail,  
I might stand a show with my old hoe  
    Along the Minot trail.”

In a more jubilant strain this poet has sung a sequel  
to his tale of stress and woe :

“ There’s no corporation  
    Can dictate our ration.  
For strikes or for boycotts  
    We don’t care a whoop.”

His muse sings a top-note of triumph in these lines,  
where it is fitting that we leave him :

“ The gophers we’ve banished,  
    The shacks have all vanished,  
Except for an odd one  
    That’s used as a coop.  
On each claim there’s a mansion  
Where stockmen were ranchin’  
Just four years ago  
    In the Mouse River Loop.”

Many men took their families into this region without even the cash needed to “ make a start.” They

---

## *The Greater America*

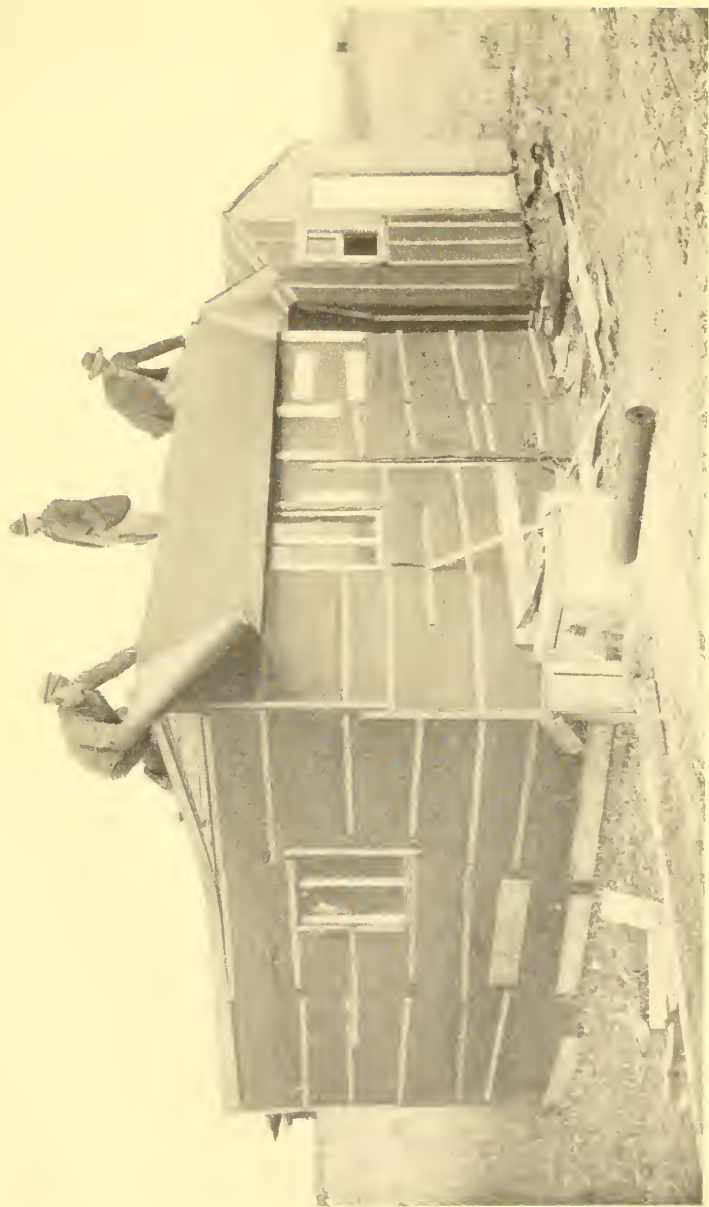
---

hired themselves out to more prosperous farmers as teamsters and laborers, filed their homestead claims, and toiled for wages, saving a little all the time, until they could build their own shacks and buy horses and farm machinery. There is not much of the romantic or picturesque in such stories as these, but the men behind them are the kind of men and their deeds are the kind of deeds that make the backbone of their country.

A sun-browned six-footer—all bone and muscle—was driving to town on top of a load of “No. 1 hard” wheat, and halted long enough to tell me his little story of success:

“I settled on my claim seven years ago without a cent. All I had coming to me was the use of a yoke of oxen to work for two weeks. The season was so dry that all I could break in two weeks was twelve acres, but I was proud of that much, and in the fall I worked at sowing and putting up a little shanty with wood sides and a sod roof. Now I have a nice, comfortable little house and granary, a hundred and thirty acres under cultivation, stock and machinery to work the farm, and this year threshed out four thousand bushels of grain. This is the country for a poor man if he wants to carve out his home with his own two hands.”

The self-made man of the eastern city who views the farmer at large as a down-trodden clodhopper with singular taste in the fashion of whiskers may



*The bank is one of the earliest buildings in the town*



---

## *The Magnet of the Wheat*

---

be enlightened by this tale of a wheat-raiser who worked with his brains and his hands:

"I came to North Dakota twenty-one years ago from Iowa. I had six broken-down plugs of horses, two steers and two plows. Had no money and was a thousand dollars in debt. I rented a farm for five years before I bought any land. Then I made up my mind to buy land on my own account, and bought two sections on time. Then I kept on raising wheat and buying land until I owned five thousand acres of land, all paid for. In the twenty-one years I cleared out of the ground in clean money, raising wheat, two hundred and forty thousand dollars. Last year I sold four thousand acres and have quit raising wheat. I am now on my way to Cuba, where my wife and I will spend the winter. Whenever I go back East I try to get my old friends and neighbors to come out here and share my prosperity."

The wheat-raiser of the rich prairie takes his gold from the soil with almost none of the drudgery that goes with real farming. He plows and sows, riding behind his horses across his fenceless quarter or half "section." He labors no more until his crop is harvested by machinery. The grain is threshed for him and he hauls it to the nearest elevator, where he is paid cash on delivery. His outdoor work is finished three months after it began. In his first year he may reap profits sufficient to pay for his land, his house and his tools. It is not uncommon to clear thirteen

---

## *The Greater America*

---

hundred to fifteen hundred dollars from one harvest on a hundred and sixty acres. The average farm in North Dakota contains three hundred and forty-two acres, and nine in every ten men own the farms they live on.

There is a black cloud on this bright picture if a wheat crop fails. The wheat-raiser has put all his eggs into one basket. He has not learned the value of diversified farming, for nature's prodigal generosity is his argument against toiling by the sweat of his brow. As he followed the cattle-men, so the farmer will follow him in a third stage of development, as population crowds into his country. Meantime he drives ten or twenty miles to cast his vote, he sends his children to school and college, and he takes a good deal of pride in his town, his county, his State, his nation and its flag.

The railroad has swept him out of his blizzard-bound isolation. He has become an inveterate traveler during the idle winter months, visiting the cities of his own and other States, far and near, like an invading army, hale, hearty and prosperous. Last year the average income of the North Dakota family was larger than in any other State of the Union.

It was in this region that a Norwegian farmer observed to the station agent at Grand Forks:

"When does this train go?"

The agent asked:

"Where do you want to go?"

---

## *The Magnet of the Wheat*

---

"I don't give a d—n," was the cheerful reply. "Give me a ticket. I just want to take a ride."

Compared with the story of the previous generation, the process of peopling this prairie belt seems to be marvelously swift and productive. Compared with the future of such areas as this, the present is only a crude beginning. For a hundred million Americans can be sustained without increasing the area of a single farm now under cultivation in this country, merely by more intelligent farming. When fully developed, the agricultural resources in sight will sustain a thousand million souls, more than ten times the present population.

To-day more than forty million Americans live on almost six million farms. One bread-winner in every three is a farmer. But from the Missouri to the Pacific the population averages only three persons to the square mile. Disregarding the increasing yields that will be reaped from arable lands by raising the standards of agriculture, the irrigation projects now planned will support an additional population of twenty-five millions on land now called outcast. The prairie-settler and town-builder, therefore, picture a passing phase, a chapter in a titanic evolution whose goal is not yet in sight.

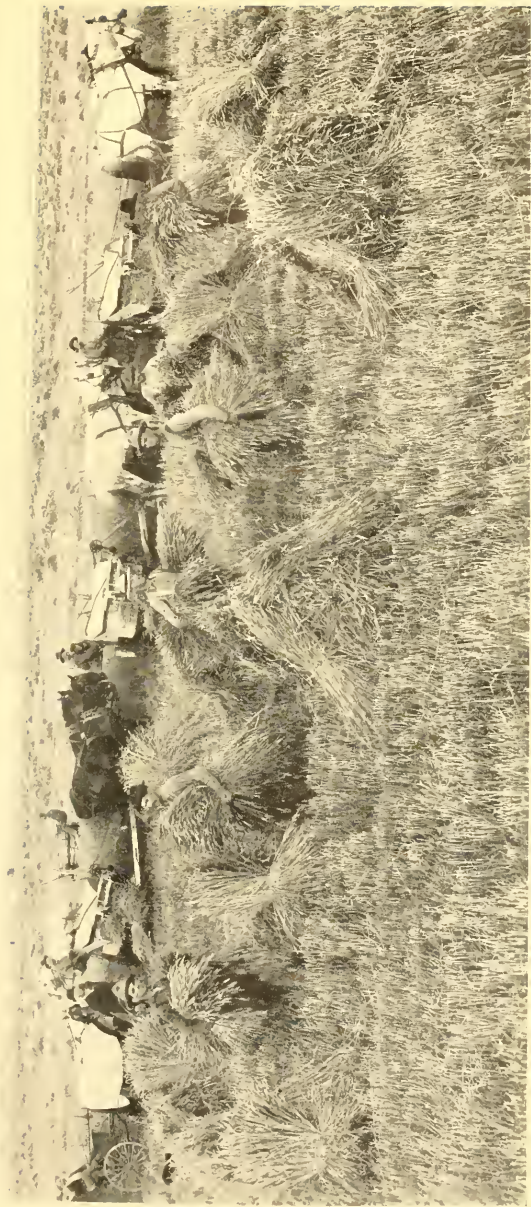
## CHAPTER VII

### “JIM ” HILL AND THE RECONSTRUCTED FARMER

THIS part of the Northwest is “ Jim ” Hill’s country; he helped to make it what it is, and he is proud of it. The settling of the Dakota prairie is typical of the work he has been doing from Minnesota to Puget Sound. The power of such a man as E. H. Harriman consists in his genius for reaching out and absorbing the work that other men have wrought. He is a product of ultra-modern business conditions, a bold strategist in the world of combinations of material wealth, typifying the spirit which most threatens the social future of the Republic. James J. Hill stands largely for the creative and independent forces that have hammered a great nation from a wilderness. Combined with the ability of a great upbuilder he possesses also the genius of the financier and the “ captain of industry,” so that other men have not been able to snatch his own from him.

This sturdy, shaggy, patriarchal-looking man, who began life as a Mississippi River “ mud ” clerk, and was later in charge of a train of creaking ox-carts that trailed north along the Red River Valley into Winnipeg, still lectures the people of his territory as if he were in truth the Moses that had led them into the promised land. They may scold at his





*The magnet of the wheat*



---

## *“ Jim ” Hill and the Reconstructed Farmer*

---

freight schedules, but they turn out by the thousands to hear him preach the doctrine of the farm as the bulwark of the nation. No county fair in Montana or Washington is too unimportant for him to omit in his tours of the Northwest. A farmer himself, he passes judgment on the prize pigs, fruit and poultry, with a discerning eye, and now and then is moved to relate such trying missionary experiences as this :

“ In the summer of twenty years ago, in this State, no rain fell from seed-time until the first of July. The grain was barely alive and promised no more than half a crop. I didn’t know as much as I do now, and I thought I would help the farmers of the State so that they would not have to depend on one crop. In my innocence I thought that they would take advantage of a chance to improve their stock. So I brought out from England and Scotland eight hundred thoroughbred bulls, and distributed them through Minnesota and South and North Dakota. What did the farmers do with these costly animals? Breed from them and improve their herds? No; they sold them for what they could get. I gave them pigs, and they killed them in the fall and made winter pork of them. This is what they did with the prize pigs that I imported from the old country and for which I had paid as much as three hundred dollars a head.

“ These farmers were misled by a lot of demagogues, fellows who care no more about the farmer

than about the wind that whistles. They told the farmers that I was trying to cast aspersions on the great wheat-raising State of Minnesota by buying the best stock I could find and distributing it without price."

Mr. Hill is a prophet who has reaped honor in his own country. He believes that agriculture must be the foundation of this country's material future, and that the iron and coal and timber, and the industries depending on them, will begin to fail in another generation. And because he is a good American, with his country's interests at heart, he loses no chance to tell the people of the great western farming regions such sledge-hammer truths as these:

"Remember that your gold mine will never be exhausted. As long as this frontier soil remains, it will turn out more money than the richest mines of Alaska or anywhere else. Cultivate it well, preserve your inheritance. Keep your children on the farm and make intelligent men and women of them, and the agricultural population of this nation always will compare favorably with any other in every quality that goes to make good citizenship. They have their full share of intelligence, and they have more than their share of patriotism. The farmer, if he knows it, is the most independent man in the world. The only consolation I get anywhere is when I go out on the farm and feel— 'Well, here I can raise hogs, horses and cattle.' Let me urge you not to get rid

of your farm. Keep the roof over the heads of your children; hand it down to them as home. They will be better off; they will be better citizens.”

“ Since the close of the war, in 1865, the enormous territory west of the Mississippi has grown from frontier settlements into great, populous, wealthy States. One-half the population of the United States is occupied directly or indirectly in the cultivation of the land, and fully one-half of the entire capital of the country is invested in farms and their buildings, and when we come to the questions of intelligence, patriotism and good citizenship, the agricultural population stands out to-day as the great sheet anchor of the nation. The wealth of the world comes from the farm, the forest, the mine and the sea. The farm has from the beginning been the foundation of our growing wealth and greatness. For the first time in the history of this country thousands of farmers from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota are seeking homes in the Canadian Northwest, because of the cheap lands offered in that country. I feel sure that no one here to-night ever expected to see the time when farmers and farmers’ sons from the best States of the West would be forced to leave their country and their flag, to seek homes in a foreign country. Land without population is a wilderness; a population without land is a mob.”

One of the striking features of the last Minnesota State Fair was a “ Pioneer Building ” made of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

logs and filled with relics of the primitive times of the earlier settlers in the regions round about. Above this log cabin waved the flag of the nation and through the doors passed hundreds of gray-haired men and women who could recall to one another the days when they were helping to tame wilderness territory for this flag of theirs, with the peaceful weapons of the farmer and the lumberman. Inside the cabin these reunited pioneers found such rude furniture and household gear as had scantily equipped their own log homes in the clearings, and they marveled anew at the transformation wrought during their generation.

When I happened to pass this building there stood in front of it an automobile from which disembarked a Dakota farmer and his family. The contrast was immensely significant. In the march of progress from the log cabin in the clearing, and the sod house and shack of the prairie, to the automobile, the party telephone line and the steam-threshing outfit, the American farmer has brought himself abreast of the times in characteristically American fashion. In the past he was the poorest, the most hard-working and most indispensable member of the community, but he is rapidly learning that science and system must everywhere supplant those clumsy and wasteful methods which made him rather the serf than the lord of the soil.

One must go into this western country to find the



farmer in his rightful place as the right arm of his country's prosperity and its most useful citizen. I have visited county and State fairs along the Atlantic seaboard where the exhibits of prize stock and produce and the implements of husbandry seemed to be no more than annexes of the trotting track, the balloon ascensions, the “ Midway ” and other spectacular frivolities. This impeachment could not be laid against this typical western fair, which might have comfortably tucked away a half dozen similar exhibitions in the eastern States.

It was first of all a gathering place for thousands upon thousands of farmers and their families from Minnesota and Wisconsin and the Dakotas. They came to enjoy themselves in a fat harvest year, with money to be cheerfully spent; but they came also to see the latest wrinkles of invention and discovery relating to their business.

There were acres and acres of agricultural machines in tumultuous operation, puffing and clanking and rattling as if they were suddenly possessed of a myriad devils, every one of them eager to show the critical onlooker that it was needed on every well-regulated farm or ranch. By hundreds the visitors crowded around these exhibits, quick to grasp the value of every new device that meant time and labor saved, ready to throw an old-fashioned machine on the scrap-heap if it was not keeping up with the rapid pace of improvement.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Here was a new corn-binder which cuts and binds the cornstalks into bundles, with a shocker to work in partnership, so that one man and a team can harvest seven or nine acres of corn in a day. And after fifty years of experiment and failure here was at last displayed a machine for picking the ears of corn, husking them and throwing them into a wagon, so that one man can gather as much corn in half an hour as he could pick by hand in half a day. Hay is not only cut and raked with machines, but carried into the barn by a hay-loader, and pitched into the mow by an automatic fork. In one of these western farms a hundred and twenty tons of hay have been put into the mow by these machines in four hours of a summer afternoon. The gasoline engine was on deck in dozens of shapes, devised to pump the farmer's water, shell his corn, grind his feed, saw his wood, run his feed-cutter, churn his butter or haul his grain.

In regions where the scarcity of labor is the farmer's most harassing problem, he is keenly on the lookout for machinery which, at small cost, will do the work of a dozen or twenty men. Therefore he goes to his State fair with something more in mind than "having a good time."

As the business of farming becomes more and more diversified, the transition affects the people of the vast regions of the West in a greater degree than the Easterner can realize. In the Dakotas the bonanza wheat farm already belongs with a past





*Blue ribbon live stock—prairie bred*



---

## *“ Jim ” Hill and the Reconstructed Farmer*

---

era. It is spectacular to see twenty plows marching abreast over miles of open country, or whole squadrons of reapers and threshers at work on one farm. But, like the cowboy, the owner of the huge wheat farm was a foe to the upbuilding and peopling of his region. His vast tracts are being cut into small farms, and towns and communities spring up, linked by good roads and telephones, where the bare prairie swept for miles and miles untenanted except during the brief season of sowing and harvesting.

The “ wheat king ” is a vanishing American, along with the “ cattle king.” And it is the women of the western prairies, who rejoice that the farmer is driving out the wheat-raiser. The wife of a Dakota farmer was talking of this coming of new and better conditions which are removing the grave social menace of the huge horde of harvest hands that must be collected to harvest the wheat crop.

“ The greatest peril to family life in this section,” said she, “ is exclusive wheat-raising, with its long periods of comparative idleness alternating with weeks of spasmodic labor, when all the family work to exhaustion, taking into their household “ hobo ” harvest hands, four-fifths of whom are moral lepers. On a farm near here where formerly nothing but wheat was grown, ten men were picked up in the streets of Fargo to help handle the harvest. Eight of them turned out to be criminals or drunkards, whose language reeked of the vilest slums. The

---

## *The Greater America*

---

foreman said he would be glad to discharge the drunken brutes, but it was either hire such men as these or have no help to cut and thresh a thousand acres of wheat. A few years later I visited that farm, and commented on the fine, intelligent-looking lot of men employed. None of them drank, nor was there any profanity or quarreling. 'They are as good as they look,' said my host. 'Any one of them could manage a farm of his own, and every man of them is saving money with that end in view.'

"'How in the world can you get such men as these?' I asked. 'What has revolutionized your farm?'

"'The three "P's," pigs, poultry and potatoes,' was the answer. 'We are no longer exclusively wheat-growers, and, having continuous employment for them, we can afford to hire our men by the year. Some of these men have been with me for three years, and my boys and girls are no longer in danger of being ruined by the hoboes that the wheat-raiser must hire or do without labor. What makes possible the many slum saloons that dot Minnesota border towns? Who make up four-fifths of the population of our jails and almshouses? The hobo. What brings him here? The wheat farm. And there you are. The moral tone of the whole grain-raising West is improving because of the diversified farming, a feature of American progress which is often overlooked.' "

---

*“ Jim ” Hill and the Reconstructed Farmer*

---

It was on another of these wheat farms, with the nearest neighbor four miles away, that the five-year-old youngster, tired of gazing at the dreary expanse of wintry stubble, observed to his mother :

“ Don’t you think some of us will be sick pretty soon, I mean real sick ? I’d be willing to swallow the very bitterest medicine, if the doctor would only come. I get so tired of seeing just us all the time.”

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LAST OF THE OPEN RANGE

THE *Nogales Oasis* of a recent date contained this paragraph, which may be called an Arizona obituary:

"The round-up in the Oro Blanco country last week was like a funeral procession. Even the horses knew there was something wrong, and went about their work with a shameless lack of spirit. Occasionally an outlaw cayuse would throw up his head and emit a loud horse laugh. Men who for years had ridden the range with the dash of centaurs and a bearing of defiance to all the world sat as still and stiff in their saddles as mutton-chopped Britishers, and with faces as solemn. For there was not a gun or a holster in the outfit. The edict had gone forth that the round-ups would hereafter be regarded as public gatherings, and the law of Arizona forbids the carrying of weapons at 'public gatherings.' "

Such signs of the times confirm the common impression that the cow-man of the "open range" is a part of a picturesque American past, a lost hero with a vanished occupation. It is true that in the Southwest the barbed-wire fence has almost wiped out the characteristic life of the old "cow outfit." The

---

## *The Last of the Open Range*

---

empire of Texas is already checkered with grazing ranches, some of them hundreds of thousands of acres in area, but nevertheless they are pastures, privately bounded and owned. And the cattle towns of Texas, Arizona, Kansas and the "Indian Nations" have been invaded and filled with a new prosperity by the prosaic farmer, the manufacturer, and the small rancher.

The era, when half a million long-horned cattle drifted north every year to the Dakotas and Montana, convoyed by an army of the finest horsemen the world ever saw, was long ago wiped out by the railroad. The time when the Texas steer roamed as free as the buffalo, and the men who rode with him knew no law or boundaries save those of their own making, will never come again. They belonged with the earliest stages of civilization. It was inevitable that on the heels of the nomad, pastoral age of this country's growth should follow the agricultural.

But it is not true that the open range has wholly vanished. Its life still runs wide and free. The heroic bigness of it, however, is to be sought no longer in the Southwest, where the cowboy has been most often framed in story. He is making his last stand in northern Montana, where I found him in the fall "round-up" soon after I left the wheat-covered prairie and the amazingly new towns of North Dakota. If you lay a ruler across the map of Montana, east and west, from Fort Buford to Fort

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Benton, it will not cross a town in a line of three hundred miles long. If you run the line north and south, say midway between Malta and Glasgow, from up on the Canadian boundary down almost to the Yellowstone, a stretch of one hundred and fifty miles will be covered without finding a settlement big enough to deserve a dot and a name on the map.

This is, roughly speaking, the country of the last great open range in the United States. Its area is greater than the combined extent of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, New Jersey and Delaware. It is not so thickly populated that men are in danger of jostling one another.

It includes, for example, Dawson County, which is bigger than the State of Maryland. There are two million people in Maryland; there are twenty-five hundred in Dawson County, Montana. While one hundred and sixty persons inhabit the average square mile of Maryland, every man, woman and child in Dawson county has five square miles.

Valley County covers more real estate than Connecticut and Massachusetts. The two New England States have about four million population. Valley County holds the magnificent total of forty-five hundred people, including an Indian Reservation in which you could lose the State of Delaware.

Three things have kept this range open into the twenty century: the climate, the grass and the lack of population. But the climate and the soil, which



---

## *The Last of the Open Range*

---

supplies the finest grazing in the world, are the factors that are bringing so swift a tide of population into this country that the finish of the old-time cattle man and his methods is plainly in sight. Even now he is making ready to quit. Within the next three or four years the surviving "outfits" will have shipped their last cattle to market from the open range of northern Montana. The march of civilization which overtook them in the Southwest was delayed a few more years up in the North, but its vanguard is closing in from all sides. The final "clean-up" is now in progress.

I counted myself as rarely fortunate in being able to witness both the old and the new conditions as spread out side by side. On the one hand were the wagons of the round-up camp and the white dust clouds that marked the "cutting" of the herds; on the other a meeting of farmers to discuss with the engineers of the Government Reclamation Service irrigation plans whereby scores of thousands of acres of grazing land were to be watered and planted in hay, wheat and alfalfa.

The dusty, sweating cowboys, picked survivors of the lost legion, some of them looking back to a quarter century of life on the open ranges, were being driven from their last battle ground by the plodding farmer in overalls and straw hat, who preferred raising grain to raising hell.

The "cow-punchers" were reading the handwriting

---

## *The Greater America*

---

on the wall. Those of a prudent habit of mind had begun to pick up their own bunches of cattle, and to stock small ranches scattered here and there on both sides of the Missouri. Some of them were even making desultory studies of the hitherto despised agricultural outlook for an honest man unafraid of toil. Others were planning to return to their native Texas, and with their old employers look after the modern steer that is "raised by hand" in a pasture and wintered on hay and alfalfa.

It was indeed a meeting of old trails and new, a cross-section of America in the making even more sharply contrasting than the panorama of the North Dakota prairie.

The history of the northern range throws back to the end of the Civil War, when the plains of Texas were covered with millions of cattle for which there was no outlet to market. The rapid settlement of the Middle West created a demand for these Texas herds, and a trail was opened into Kansas. Besides finding a new market, it was discovered that southern cattle wintered in the country to the northward gained in weight and fatness at an amazing rate. Nature favored breeding in Texas, where in good seasons almost every cow had her calf, but beef cattle grew lean and rangy. Therefore they were sent north to fatten, and the trail of the Texas cowboy gradually extended up into Montana and the Dakotas.

He found a country favored above all others for



*A Montana round-up of twenty-five years ago*



---

## *The Last of the Open Range*

---

making big, fine cattle of his angular Texas steers. The buffalo had learned this centuries before, when it chose this area for its winter and summer pasture. As the buffalo dwindled the cattle increased, until in the greatest year of the "drive" nearly a million cattle were moved across country from Texas, and with them went four thousand men and thirty thousand horses.

This was in 1884, by which time the buffalo had vanished from the range. Its bones were being gathered and shipped for fertilizer by the carload. It has been estimated that before 1890 the bones of seven million buffalo had been shipped from points in North Dakota alone. The range was swept clean for the cattle man. The Indians were rounded up on reservations. The settler had steered clear of these vast northern plains, which were believed to be too arid for farming. But the buffalo grass and the blue-joint supplied not only rich grazing in summer, but standing hay, cured by nature, that sustained cattle on the range through the blizzard-swept winters.

As the railroad crept north and south, the Texas outfits trailed part of the northward journey and shipped their steers over the remainder of the distance. Year by year, as the trail shortened and the railroads extended, the "drive" dwindled, until the steel highway stretched from Texas to Billings, Montana. But the cattle continued to stream north by the all-rail route, and this movement has been in full tide

---

## *The Greater America*

---

for more than fifteen years. From thirty to fifty thousand cattle of one brand were thus transplanted to be "finished off" for market on the Montana range.

North Dakota has become covered with wheat, which has steadily moved westward, eating more and more into the open range. Already the wheat has spread a hundred miles west beyond the climatic limit assigned it ten years ago, and now irrigation has joined forces with "dry land farming." Another reason for the downfall of the "cow-man" in Montana was his own short-sightedness in failing to safeguard his future. His herds must have water, and the range is useless without it. The outposts of the farming and ranching invasion got possession of the springs and water holes by purchase and homestead right.

But away with these epitaphs and this death-chant of the cow-puncher! He was still on the Montana range in all his glory in the autumn of 1905, and there is work for him to do before he has rounded up his last beef herd in this fenceless land of billowing plain, butte and mountain, in the crystalline air of this illimitable out-of-doors. Three big outfits, a dozen to twenty men to a camp, were slowly working in from the Little Rockies, when a Great Northern express dropped me off at Malta, a famous old cow-town, which is still busy and occasionally even tempestuous. So simple an act as swinging off the

---

## *The Last of the Open Range*

---

platform of a sleeping car was to step into a different world of men and conditions from that left behind.

On all sides of the little town lay the glorious sweep of untamed country. To find another railroad to the northward was to ride a hundred and fifty miles to the Canadian Pacific; to find a railroad to the southward meant as long a ride to the Northern Pacific. On the edge of the town a freighters' outfit was making ready to pull out four days to a camp near the Little Rockies. Ten horses led the string of laden wagons, behind which trailed the covered chuck-wagon, equipped for sleeping and cooking, for there were no hotels on this route.

The boss and his two helpers were wrestling with a broncho which, until this ill-fated day, had never felt a harness across his back. He was needed as an off-wheeler, and he had to go. He fought like a hero possessed of seven devils, and three men toiled for an hour to get him into the traces and to keep clear from his infernally active heels.

At length his nine comrades jumped into their collars, and the rebel simply had to go with them. He lay down and was dragged on his ear until his addled wits perceived there was nothing in this sort of mutiny. He rose and slid stiff-legged until, outnumbered, outvoted and outgeneraled, he surged into the collar like a thunderbolt and thereafter tried to pull the whole load, in the vain hope of tearing something out by the roots.



---

## *The Greater America*

---

The long string of horses and wagons wound out into the open country, and in a little while dipped across a grassy undulation and was gone. A swirl of dust marked its progress for several miles,—this plodding caravan, with its tanned and bearded men, unlettered and slow of speech, used to living out under the sky, seeing few of their kind. It was thus the pioneers crossed the plains a half century ago.

Akin to this episode in its portrayal of conditions which are all but crowded out of this twentieth century, was the aspect of the plain that rolled sheer to the horizon from another side of Malta. Fogged in white alkali dust, five thousand cattle were eddying and drifting into scattered herds. They were not grazing at random. Along the fringes of the piebald masses mounted men were outlined at rest on the crest of the rising ground, or racing headlong into the dust clouds.

What looked like confusion was system, skill and daring. Nearer vision showed the cow-punchers at work "cutting" the cattle for shipment. They were in the midst of the fall round-up. As with a drag-net, plain and coulee and butte and river bottom had been swept within a hundred miles radius to sift out and bring in the steers that were ready for market.

Fat and sleek and "rollicky" from the summer's grazing, the cattle were hard to handle. It was a field for the display of the craft of man and horse. These were no farmers transformed into cow-hands



---

## *The Last of the Open Range*

---

by the gift of a rope and a pair of "chaps." Almost every man had been bred in the business from boyhood. A big steer bolted from the ruck, and shot across the prairie, tail in air. There streaked after him, hell-for-leather, a wizened man half lost in a pair of "chaps" with the fur on. He wore a pair of goggles and a little beard which was white, not all with dust. Old, but spare and sinewy, riding his cow-pony like a wild Indian, he might have stood for a picture of "The Last of the Cowboys."

The runaway steer could not move quick enough to dodge the wise pony and the dare-devil rider. When the fugitive had been turned after a breathless chase, the old man galloped back to search out another steer with his brand on its flank somewhere in the smother of cattle and dust. He pulled up to wipe his goggles, and the wrinkled parchment of his swarthy cheek confirmed the surmise that he was a veteran of the veterans.

"I guess you won't find 'em riding much older than me," he said. "Most all the old-timers on the range knows Doc Thompson. I began punching cattle in '72 and I'm still hard at it. I'm too old to learn a new trade. When this range is cleaned up, I reckon I'll have to try what I can do riding herd on a cabbage patch or a likely bunch of potatoes."

His very fashion of "cutting" cattle showed that he was an old-timer. Everything was done with a rush and a hurrah. His pony was either at rest or

---

## *The Greater America*

---

on the dead run. There were no half-way measures. When he picked out a steer he went after it on the jump, nor thought it worth while to reckon whether he ran a pound or two of beef off an animal so long as he got there in a gorgeous hurry. The golden age when he helped "shoot up" towns for diversion had passed. But in his impetuous manner and his reckless riding there was the flavor of the ruder time that bred him and his kind.

Of a sterling type, but less flamboyant, was the dark-visaged, black-mustached foreman of the Milner outfit, "Bill" Jaycox, than whom you must travel far to find a better cow-man. Before some of the precocious wizards of finance who dwell in eastern sky-scrapers were weaned, he was outfitting pack trains for troopers of Uncle Sam who were fighting Indians in the Bad Lands and along the Missouri. He used to break in and outfit the creaking trains of bull-carts that trailed out of Fort Benton when it was *the* city of the Northwest, and the head of navigation on the Missouri. He rode the trail with herds of Texas cattle moving to the northern range ahead of the railroad. He has a wife and babies and a ranch tucked away in a smiling Montana valley, and he will be ready to quit the range "when the range quits him."

"Bill" Jaycox and his comrades are of the kind bred wholly by American conditions, whose like will not happen often on the farms and in the cities that



*"Picked survivors of the lost legion"*



---

## *The Last of the Open Range*

---

will cover the ranges they rode. Such old-time cowmen as these are vanishing exemplars of the gospel of elemental manhood, standing on its two feet, wholly apart from the complex scheme of existence which hems in its neighbors. The destiny of the farmer is coupled with the factories that turn out his tilling and harvesting machinery. The sailor is helpless without steam in the boilers, and firemen and engineers in the hold. But give the cowboy his horse, his saddle, his slicker, his rope and his six-shooter, and he will do his work, man to man, asking no odds. He is crude and he must go, but he is honest and brave and loyal, which qualities are not guaranteed by such trumpeted factors of "progress" as electricity, telephones, and great life insurance companies.

From sunrise to dusk the three outfits outside of Malta sifted the uneasy herds, stopping only at noon to ride back to their camps in the hills, eat dinner, change horses and return to their task. Shipping could not begin till next morning at daybreak. Therefore, when the sun dropped low in the cloudless sky, the herds moved slowly toward the nearest water hole, and the weary outfits scattered toward their camps.

One bunch of cattle was waiting its turn for water, and two men were left as the first watch of the night herd until they could be relieved for supper. The spare, bent figure of old "Doc" Thompson, on his motionless pony, was outlined against the reddening

---

## *The Greater America*

---

sky. In front of him were the quiet cattle, beginning to "bed down" on the grass. The pose of the old man as he dropped forward a little in his saddle, his hands clasped on the horn had a certain indefinable pathos. He seemed to signify more than merely a cow-hand tired after a day of hard riding. The passing of the virile and rugged youth of the nation was suggested in the silhouette he made against the sunset sky. Then the roar of a train came over the plains. Its lights went by like shooting stars and vanished in the paling west. The spirit of the new civilization was sweeping across the last of the open range.

## CHAPTER IX

### JACK TEAL AND SOME OTHERS

THAT night the cow-punchers took possession of Malta. They had been three weeks on the round-up, and they rode into town like homing pigeons. It may cause disappointment to record that, while a considerable amount of whisky was absorbed, nobody was killed, and most of the bar-room lights were intact at midnight.

A group of cattle-owners planted their chairs on the sidewalk in front of the hotel. Every man of the half dozen counted his cattle by thousands in Texas and Montana. The least prosperous of the company could have rounded up a million dollars' worth of beef on the hoof if he were put to it. But you could not have found among them all a grain of the "bluff" and money worship and straining pretense that surges nightly through the corridors of the Waldorf-Astoria.

After a while there joined them a stocky man whose garb was not only careless, but seemed to speak of poverty. A dusty handkerchief was around his collarless neck. His shapeless trousers were tucked into dustier boots, and his slouch hat looked as if it had been stamped on by a cayuse. His

---

## *The Greater America*

---

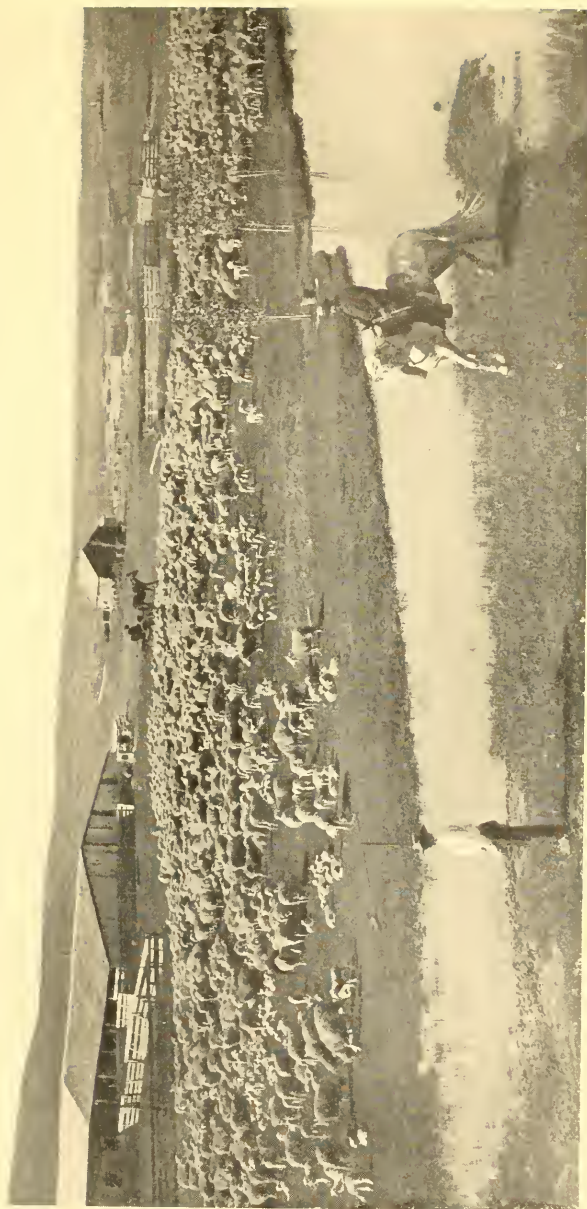
manner was almost shy, as if he were nobody and painfully aware of that depressing fact. After he had passed on, one of the group carelessly observed:

"Of course, I naturally despise sheep. But the sheep-man is ace high in this country. We're all back numbers. The cow-man is in the discard for fair. Look at Ben Phillips, there, who just loafed up. He has some cattle, and he shipped fifteen hundred head this year. There's between sixty and seventy thousand dollars as his cattle rake-off for the season. But that isn't a marker to what he's doing with sheep. Why, his wool alone will fetch him a hundred and fifty thousand dollars this year. And he has ten thousand lambs. There's twenty-five thousand more. I figure that his cash income this year is well past the two hundred thousand dollar mark. Isn't that enough to make you sore on sheep-men? He carries about twenty-five thousand sheep, he tells me. He has forty thousand acres fenced for them on one range. And I remember when Ben Phillips moved from the Judith Basin to the north side of the Missouri eleven years ago with less than ten thousand sheep."

A cowboy came out of the nearest bar-room, flung a leg over his pony, drove home both spurs and clattered up street, singing at the top of his lungs. One of the owners was moved to remark with reminiscent chuckle:

"It seems tame in Malta, but it's not so very long





*A Montana sheep ranch*



---

## *Jack Teal and Some Others*

---

ago that Jack Teal held up the whole town for half a day because his feelings had been hurt. Before the hotel was built we stockmen used to sleep in a log house, in a line between the row of saloons and the dance halls. This put us under a cross fire, for the cow-punchers in the saloons had a cheerful habit of emptying their guns at the dance-hall windows, and vice versa. I was writing letters one night when my foreman came in and said:

“ ‘ I hate to bother you, but Jack Teal is getting mad, and he says he’s liable to be real mad if things go on. And as he’s in the saloon just in front here, I reckon you want to know when to dodge when the shooting gets wild. Jack does seem irritated. A sheep-herder accused him of stealing a bundle of coyote pelts. And Jack didn’t like it, of course, and to show his contempt for sheep-men, he up and bit off the sheep-herder’s ear. Another sheep-man chips in to help his partner, and Jack sails in and bites off *his* ear, to show that he is more contemptuous than ever. It does look to me as if he might get real mad after a while.’ ”

“ The foreman had made a conservative report. Jack was ‘ getting mad.’ Three soundly whipped sheep-men were wiping the blood from their features, and starting out to swear out a warrant for Jack’s arrest. They were gone for some time, but were unable to find a marshal or deputy daring enough to arrest Jack when he was ‘ irritated.’ ”

---

## *The Greater America*

---

"Whereupon, the justice of the peace, a strapping big Scotchman, said he'd serve the papers himself. He collided with Jack, and when the smoke cleared, Jack had Justice on the floor and badly battered.

"It must have been about this time that Jack decided that he was 'real mad' over the way he was treated in Malta. He rode out to camp, no one venturing to annoy his sensitive temperament as he galloped through the street. An hour later I rode out to camp with my foreman. The moonlight was bright, and about half-way we met Jack coming back to town. He was about as alarming a sight as I ever bumped into. He had it in for the wide, wide world, for he reined up twenty feet from me, threw down his Winchester, wobbling it square and fair at my manly chest. His finger was fooling most carelessly with the trigger as he remarked with deadly deliberation:

" 'I ain't quite sure whether I ought to kill you or not.'

"He thought I was coming out to arrest him, and we argued the point for several minutes, while that fool gun was held on my heart. At length Jack let the gun drop with seeming reluctance, and rode on to town. There he proceeded to shoot at every head that showed. The stores and saloons put up their shutters and all business was suspended. Jack took a commanding position in the main street and

---

## *Jack Teal and Some Others*

---

put in several enjoyable hours taking pop-shots at every man who dared emerge from cover. Malta was put out of commission. Tiring of this amusement, or running out of ammunition, he rode back to camp.

"I met him next morning, and he looked mighty ashamed of himself. I gave him the devil of a lecture, not so much about his general line of conduct, as his shocking practice of biting off the ears of people who disagreed with him. He took it to heart and promised he would never do it again, and he kept his word. I asked with some indignation:

" 'What did you mean by holding *me* up, the best friend you've got? '

"His only comment was eminently characteristic:

" 'Well, you stood it d—n well, Mr. Milner.' "

While we smoked and talked there dismounted in front of the hotel this same Jack Teal, dusty from long and lonely riding, blue-eyed and sandy-haired, almost diffident of manner. When we had adjourned to the bar, and Jack had ordered a "dust-cutter" to sluice the alkali from his throat, one of the company asked him:

"Anything doing? "

Teal rubbed his stubbled chin and replied:

"Nothing much. I've been out with George Hall, the stock detective. I'm working for Ben Phillips, the sheep-man, just now. Somebody's been cutting his fences. I'm watching the fences and trying to

---

## *The Greater America*

---

ketch up with the parties. There may be something doing then.

"What was I doing with George Hall? Last week he cuts the trail of a human coyote that's running off a bunch of stolen horses. This rustler is heading for the boundary, and when George gets the word he rides into Glasgow to dig up the sheriff, and get a warrant and make the play all proper. He couldn't find the sheriff, and not wanting to cut loose alone, in case of accident, he rounds me up and asks me to go along. I'm out of the deputy business, being paid to ride fence for Ben Phillips, but being anxious to oblige an old friend, I says:

" 'All right, George. Count me in. Where is this — — rustler of yours? '

"My Winchester is in the saddle boot as usual, and the pair of us trails out north, until we swing a circle that fetches a few miles to the south of Malta. The rustler is laying up to rest his stock, and we get the word that he's camped near a coulee when we picket our ponies for the night. George tells me:

" 'Now, Jack, there ain't going to be no killing in this. We'll jump him at daylight while he's in his blankets and tie him up and pack him back to Glasgow smooth and easy.'

" 'I don't want no killing,' says I, 'but this party may want to do some shooting of his own, George, and we don't take no chances.'

"At the first crack of daylight we walk ahead,

---

## *Jack Teal and Some Others*

---

and sights the horse-thief rolled up in his blankets with a tarpaulin over his head. I pulls down on him with my Winchester and George with his six-shooter, and we calls, 'Throw up your hands.'

"He sits up and blinks and puts 'em over his head, and while I covers him, George invites him to step out and be searched. While George is going over him, I goes through his bed and digs out a rifle and two six-shooters. The rustler takes it quiet and nice, and asks to walk over and get his best horse, which is grazing about twenty yards away toward the mouth of the coulee, saddled up over night.

"It looks like a safe play, for we have him covered plenty. I notice that as Mr. Rustler edges over to his horse, he ain't aiming to catch him. He don't go at it right. Instead of steering to get his horse by the picket rope and head him round to camp, he sort of ambles behind the pony's tail, slow and easy, and the horse naturally walks on ahead of him. They are drifting toward the coulee a step at a time, and I says to George:

"'He ain't acting like he wants to ketch that cayuse and lead him back into camp. He's coaxing him away for a break up the coulee.'

"George laughs, and don't allow the rustler is planning any such foolish play as that.

"Just then, Mr. Rustler makes a dash for it, climbs his horse, and is off, up the coulee, hell-for-leather. We make a jump for our horses, and the



thief has a good flying start of a couple of hundred yards, and he's on a fresh horse.

" 'Throw up them hands, or there'll be a killing,' yells George.

" Mr. Rustler never looks back, but he lays out along that horse's back and is certainly burning the wind. George gets away ahead of me, and we're making tracks, the three of us, over some mighty rough country. George has his automatic six-shooter, and I has my carbine. I aims to take a shot as soon as I can, but I'm up against a funny proposition.

" George is riding between me and the rustler, we three being strung out in pretty near a straight line. I don't want to plug my friend, but I'm anxious to get a shot at the gent ahead of him. After a little while the thief swings a slight curve to keep up along the bottom of the coulee, and I see his pony's nose poke out no more than a foot ahead of George. There was just room to throw the sight on the rustler's horse, and a chance of getting him through the head. We were on the dead jump, and I couldn't see more than eight inches of the farther horse in front of George when I turned loose.

" Being scared that way of hitting George I throwed a mite too far ahead, and I saw the bullet hit in the bank. It was kind of nervous shooting, and I waited again till the rustler weaved ahead a mite. This time I had to shoot plumb over George's



---

## *Jack Teal and Some Others*

---

shoulder, and I wasn't quite easy in my mind. Mistakes are easy that way when you're buck-jumping over rocks, and your friend is dead in line with the coyote you're aiming to kill.

"This time, I found it out later, I put the bullet plumb into the back of the rustler's saddle. It hit a row of iron tacks, turned up, and no more'n bulged through the leather seat, just enough to make the rustler think he was hit without hurting him none. He was some distracted and looked around and felt of himself. Meantime George had worked up within shooting distance, and throwed loose with his six-shooter. The first bullet hit the rustler plumb between the shoulders, the second drilled him through the brain, and he slid off his pony like a bundle of blankets.

"We slung him across a pony and brung him into Glasgow, and that was the end of it. We didn't go out to do any killing. It ought not to have been necessary, but that rustler was a blank, blank fool. For George can shoot some, when he has to."

Mr. Teal told the story with a modesty which overlooked his own nerve and confidence in himself when he was shooting within a hair's breadth of George Hall. The "Wild West" stars, who shoot at glass balls and "faked up" targets with ranges all measured, make a spectacular show. But their work seems rather commonplace alongside such a plain tale as this.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

"Was George Hall at all nervous when you were singeing his whiskers in this fashion?" I asked.

"No, I guess not," said Jack. "He didn't mention it none. We've run together a good deal. He knows I wasn't going to take no chances of putting a bullet into him by any fool mistake."

It is also worth more than passing mention that Mr. George Hall was doing some clean-cut work of his own. From a flying horse in a rocky cañon he put two bullets into his surging target, at a distance of more than a hundred yards, and with a revolver at that.

There was no boastful strain in Jack Teal. He told of this episode in the day's work with a tolerant air of duty toward entertaining a tenderfoot who for some unknown reason seemed absurdly curious about the most commonplace affairs. As we sat there, and looked through the open door, a Great Northern express, bound for the Pacific Coast, boomed past the station. Tourists in dining-car and sleeper looked out at the sleepy cow-town, and were doubtless saying to one another:

"Years ago this was the kind of frontier you read about, when the cowboys and bad men and six-shooters were busy. It's all gone now, and riding across these prairies is an infernally monotonous proceeding."

Mr. Jack Teal clanked out of the bar, cinched up his pony, and made ready to ride fifty miles away

---

## *Jack Teal and Some Others*

---

on the open range, forty miles from a town, to camp in his blanket for two or three weeks. He did not say it, but it was known that if he "ketched up" with the persons who were cutting Ben Phillips' fence, there would be a "killing," nine chances out of ten. The West is alleged to be colorless and quiet, but it is not unlikely that Mr. Jack Teal will die with his boots on in the performance of his duty, for he is a pitcher that has been often to the well.

Another owner from Texas was moved to contribute another tale of somewhat less recent life on the northern range:

"When I go to Chicago or New York it's hard for me to realize that things have not quite simmered down to the trolley and asphalt pavement stage of life out here on the old trail. For instance, there was the round-up of the 'Dutch' Henry gang of rustlers and outlaws only a few years ago, when 'Leather' Griffith and his posse lay fourteen days in the hills just north of here, trying to catch the outlaws that were hidden somewhere in there. It was in the dead of winter, and some of the sheriff's outfit started in such a hurry that they had nothing but their blankets. They slept in the snow with their saddles under their heads, until it was figured out that the ranchmen in the hills were passing information along to the rustlers, being scared to death at the name of 'Dutch' Henry.

---

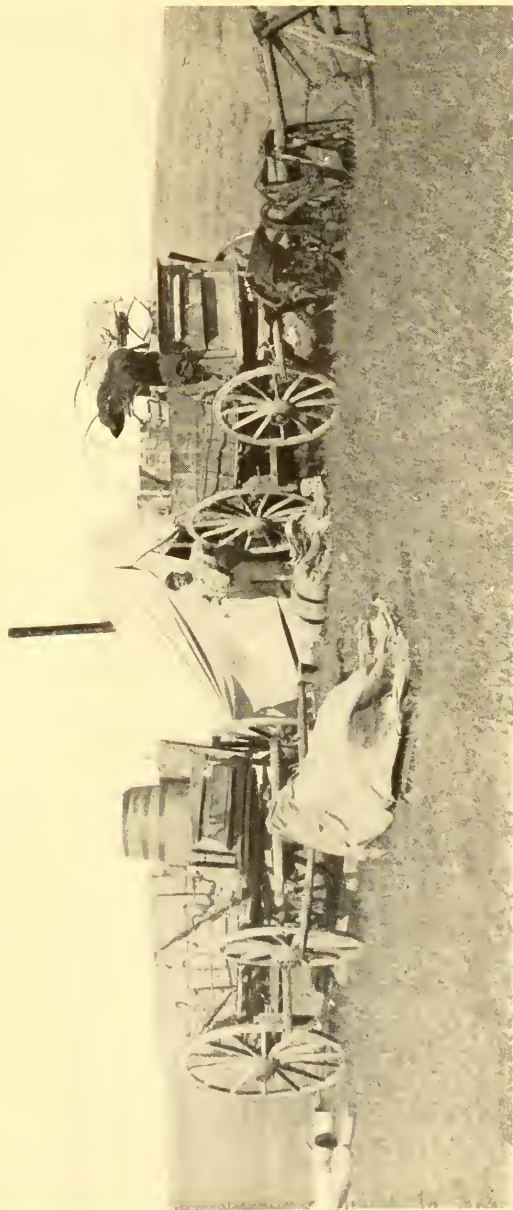
## *The Greater America*

---

"If the word was being passed along ahead of them, there was no sense in the posse's staying out any longer, so 'Leather' Griffith called them in. But he left two good men behind, George Bird and Jack Moran, who stowed themselves away in a coulee and came near freezing stiff. But the trick worked. The word went through the country that all the sheriff's outfit had gone into Glasgow and Malta.

"After two or three days, Bird and Moran rode down to the nearest ranch, and kept their eyes peeled to see that nobody broke out to carry information to the rustlers. An old man and a boy were the only people living at the ranch, and the two visitors told them they were out looking up some stray horses. The rancher welcomed them, for he was in fear of his life, and wanted protection against the rustlers. It wasn't more than a day before the boy came running into the house, and told the two deputies that one of the 'Dutch' Henry gang was coming in, Carlisle, he thought his name was. From description, Bird and Moran sized up the stranger as Jones, one of the most desperate men of the gang, although they could not swear to it. However, the visitor walked in, taking it for granted the coast was clear, and bumped into the two deputies, whom he could not quite make out. He was suspicious, and they were alert for the first move in one of the most remarkable plays ever pulled off in the West.

"These three men ate supper at the same table,



*The round-up camp*



---

## *Jack Teal and Some Others*

---

chatting pleasantly, but all hands were keyed up for action and ready for the curtain to go up with a rush. The evening passed without incident. The deputies knew that if their man was Jones, the slightest bungle meant a killing.

"There was only one spare bed, and without remark the three men took off their coats and boots and piled in together, three in a bed. They lay awake all night, side by side, touching elbows, each listening for the slightest movement made by one of his fellows. Each man had his six-shooter under his pillow, his hand on it all the time, it's safe to gamble.

"This was a situation hard to beat in any novel you ever read. The pull on those three sets of nerves must have been trying, but nobody batted an eyelash, and the trio got up, washed and sat down to breakfast. Now this Carlisle, or Jones, sat at the head of the table. At his right was the old rancher, at his left was the deputy, Moran, and at the foot of the table was the boy. Bird offered to wait on the table and nobody kicked, so he passed dishes and did not sit down.

"Something was about due to drop. Men can't stand that kind of a strain forever. At last George Bird staked his life on one throw, and you can bet he had figured it pretty carefully during his wakeful night. He had it mapped out that, while the outlaw was mighty suspicious, he wasn't quite sure, and that the quiet and easy twelve hours he had put in with

these genial strangers had him some puzzled in his mind. This was what Bird banked on, he having a keen set of mental works for a deputy.

"He sauntered over to the wall, took a bag of tobacco and papers out of a pocket and began to roll a cigarette. This move turned his back square toward Jones at the table. The other deputy sized up the situation out of one eye, but kept on absorbing bacon and beans as if there was nothing doing.

"Now follows the part of the play that interests me most. When Bird deliberately turned his back on the outlaw, and Moran didn't even look up, Jones figured it that no man really gunning after him would give him a chance like that. Bird walked back to the table, then turned again, went over to his coat, fished out a match, again with his back to the outlaw. Moran kept on chatting easy and calm, while his partner stood looking out of the window and lighting his cigarette.

"But as Bird turned toward them, he made a lightning swoop with one hand and caught up his Winchester carbine that was leaning against a cupboard in that corner. This was what he had been aiming to do all through his tobacco and cigarette play.

"He threw the carbine down on Jones almost with the same motion, and told him to throw up his hands. The outlaw made a motion to pull his gun from inside the waistband of his trousers, where he had



tucked it for breakfast. But Bird was too quick for him. He shot twice before Jones could get his six-shooter into play, and the outlaw fell off his chair against the stove with one bullet through his head and another through his lungs. Before he died, he muttered:

“ ‘ I slept in the same bed with the ———, and they shot me down like a dog.’ ”

“ His gun had dropped from his hand, but with his last gasp, so Moran told me, his right forefinger was twitching as he tried to pull a trigger that wasn't there.”

Next morning we rode out to a cow-camp among the hills, after the shipping was over, and the “ rollicky ” Texas cattle and the more unruly natives had been driven into the stock-pens and up the shutes to the waiting cars. It was good to lie on the grass near the cook's tent and the chuck-wagon, and watch the cow-punchers come in from their hard and dusty task. Now they would ride the range again for two weeks, “ making the circle ” to round up more cattle to be driven in for shipment. Two hundred picked horses grazed within sight of the camp, to keep fifteen men in fresh mounts during their long circuit of several hundred miles after the scattered herds that were roaming at their own sweet will.

The cook was a man of infinite resource, whose thatch had grown gray with cow outfits from the Rio Grande to the Canadian boundary. When he

snatched a quiet hour in the early evening to join a group of cow-punchers spinning yarns of other days, he was reminded to recount as follows:

“Some of you remember that fiddle-player over on the N-Bar-N Ranch? He’s horse-wrangler for the Lazy S outfit now. Yes, that’s the man. He rode past here yesterday, but he still looked sore and wouldn’t stop. The boys were sure annoyed by his fiddle-playin’ that time. He would sit around the bunk-house, ‘wee-waw-in’ and ‘wee-waw-in’ at all times of the day and night. He was just learnin’ and it was torturin’. The rest of us got so it was more tryin’ on the nerves to be dreadin’ that fiddle, not knowin’ when it was due to break loose, than to listen to it when it did happen. To get rid of this painful suspense, we worked out a scheme which was laid before the fiddler somethin’ like this:

“‘Here’s what you can do. Figure out just how long each day you’ve got to practice to become a virtue-oso. If it’s an hour, all right; if it’s two hours, all right. But pick your spell, and name the hour of the day and stick to it hereafter. That gives us warnin’ when to look out for it, and we won’t be settin’ around in a state of nervous panic and gettin’ cases of horrors. If you don’t like this, then your fiddle is smashed over your head, pronto.’

“The fiddler didn’t like it, but he studied a while and said he needed two hours a day to keep his hand in.

“ ‘All right,’ says the gang. ‘It’s a tough proposition, but if it’s two hours, she goes.’

“Right on the first day all hands got sore on the bargain, but the word had been passed and we stood pat. This locoed fiddler ‘wee-waw-ed’ for a while and then asked how long he had been playin’. ‘Half an hour,’ said the man that held the watch.

“He started up again and fiddled a while till his arm got tired, and then he laid down and wanted to quit.

“ ‘One hour,’ said the time-keeper. ‘Keep her goin’. We’re makin’ good on our end of the bargain. You can’t lay down on your end of it, not on your life.’ The fiddler grunted and cussed some, and sailed in and ‘wee-waw-ed’ most mournful for half an hour more. Then the boys broke loose and renigged. They simply couldn’t stand it any longer, for they saw that there would be no livin’ through the winter with a bargain like that. So they grabbed Mr. Fiddler and strung him with a rope around his feet to two bull-rings about eight feet up on the wall, and left him, head down, to think it over, hopin’ that if all his brains rushed to his head at once, he might get a gleam of horse sense and quit his vicious habits.

“He wriggled quite violent, and finally managed to climb up his leg and get a knife out of his belt. Without carin’ for consequences, he cuts the rope and drops on the back of his neck with a thump that

---

*The Greater America*

---

shook the buildin'. He was fightin' mad when he come to, and he makes such a rash play with his knife that the musical festivities over at the N-Bar-N wound up for good with one man settin' on the fiddler's head, another on his stomach, and a third whalin' the fiddle into toothpicks against a post."

## CHAPTER X

### THE LOST CHARLEY KEYES MINE

THE talk of the cow-men drifted back to recollections of the days when the Missouri River was the great highway into the new Northwest, and a man from Fort Benton who had dropped in to visit old friends in the outfit was moved to relate the following tale:

"Hunting after lost mines is an acute symptom of a sprained intellect. Oh, yes, I've been one of those fools who thought he could find the Pegleg and the Breyfogle and the Lost Cabin. Why, down in the California desert so many prospectors have gone dippy this way that when a man needs a tin hat to keep his brains from milling they don't call it locoed any more. They say he's 'Breyfogled,' and let it go at that.

"But for action and what I might call feverish interest, the trip I made after the lost Charley Keyes mine was the finest ever. No, I didn't find the mine, but there was a mine, all right. It's there yet, and now and then you'll hear of a husky and hopeful gent with nothing better to do who is trailing off down the Missouri to find the spot where Charley Keyes dug out his load of nuggets thirty years ago.

"My partner and I were young and foolish, and

we went at it in dead earnest. At Fort Benton we picked up all there was to know of the old story that had been thrashed out a million times. Here are all the facts we had to work on: Along in the early seventies this Charley Keyes, a prospector, was coming into this country with his partner, John Lepley. There were no railroads, so of course they came up the Missouri in a steamboat. Passing a point near the mouth of the Musselshell, about a hundred and fifty miles below Fort Benton, Keyes, who was an old California miner, was looking the country over from the hurricane deck, and observed to Lepley:

“ ‘ If I can read signs right there is gold in the hills over yonder, and I’m coming back here some day and do a little prospecting. It certainly looks good to me.’

“ Lepley recalled this remark later. But they did not hop off, and they wandered out of Fort Benton, prospecting over in the Prickly Pear district, and walked plumb over the Last Chance Gulch near Helena, where gold was found by the wagon load a few years later. They worked along on Silver Creek, without much luck until winter was coming in. Then Keyes decided to go back to Fort Benton, try to raise a little coin, get a new grub stake and work around farther east. He did not like the notion of staying out for the winter with no gold in sight and mighty little cash in their clothes.



*A freighter's outfit*





---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

Lepley balked and decided to stick it out and hold down their claims and take care of the camp. So they agreed to part company for the time, and Keyes laid down the law most emphatic in his farewell address to his partner:

“ ‘ If I send for you, Johnny, you drop everything and come. I don’t care a damn what it is, but drop it and come quick.’ ”

“ Keyes didn’t go into details, and afterwards Lepley reckoned that those gold signs along the Missouri must have been stewing in his memory. Anyway, there is where Keyes headed for as soon as he could. He stayed in Fort Benton a little while, and then drifted down the Missouri and camped out with the soldiers at Fort Union, which stood east of the mouth of the Musselshell. He hunted buffalo for the garrison for several months for his grub and wages, and was looking the country over and prospecting under cover, on the side.

“ When he had the country pretty well mapped out he cut loose from the fort and went off on his own hook and vanished. The next thing heard of him is when he turns up at Fort Benton with five thousand dollars’ worth of nuggets in a sack. He left his gold with the bank, turned some into cash, and got a receipt for it. We found the record on the moldy old books of the bank when we tried to get on the trail twenty-five years later. This showed that Charley Keyes had found the mine all right. He

stayed in Fort Benton long enough to get together a big outfit, which included a bunch of Blackfeet Indians to pack his goods. Keyes, his party and his kit and his mining tools and a lot of timber for building sluices started down the Missouri in flat boats to return to his mine. And that was the last ever seen of them alive, excepting one little Blackfeet girl. From her it was learned that the party had been wiped out by a band of Sioux, who had an unpleasant habit of looking for river travel in those days. The first steamer up the river in the spring found ten bodies and buried them. The Sioux took the little girl along with them, but she escaped a few years later and made her way back to her tribe of Blackfeet. This catastrophe put a stop to hunting for the Charley Keyes mine for ten years or so, or until the hostile Indians were cleaned out of Montana.

"We found the survivor on the Fort Belknap Reservation, a wrinkled hag of a Blackfeet squaw, who told us all she could remember, which wasn't much. She could recall that just before the massacre she had heard Keyes say they were 'two sleeps' away from his mine, and that the place where he said this was close to old Fort Copeland. Now this fort long ago disappeared, but after a search we found an old map on which we located Fort Copeland, and felt that we had something definite to work on.

"Lepley was dead, and we were lucky enough to

---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

find Mose Solomon, who had been on the steamboat when Keyes first came up the Missouri. The old man recalled that Keyes shaded his eyes and looked south across the hills and said:

“ ‘There’s my country.’

“ This pinned the location of the mine down to a small area. It was near the junction of the Mussel-shell and the Missouri and two days’ journey south from old Fort Copeland, if the squaw’s memory could be trusted. So my pal and I set sail down the Missouri in a flat-bottomed skiff, prepared to rake the country with a fine-tooth comb. Do you know, we scraped our way down stretches of that old river that set a man back thirty years in the history of the West.

“ There were surely some relics of other days. We spent the night with one old cuss who had been an Indian trader in the merry days of the buffalo. The ruins of the old stockade were around his house where he used to trade whisky for robes.

“ ‘I didn’t calculate to keep any whisky on hand that was more’n twenty-four hours old,’ said the old codger, without a blush of shame. ‘I used to stand with one foot on the top of the stockade and the other on the roof of my shack and hand down a cup full of whisky to an Indian who handed me up a buffalo robe in exchange. Two or three of my men sat on the roof with loaded rifles, for the liquor was sudden and searchin’, and we wa’n’t

---

## *The Greater America*

---

takin' no chances. Business usually wound up in a grand orgy, and we sat inside with the gates barred till the skies cleared. We ginerally made the whisky out of alcohol and colorin' matter. Once I found I was clean out of stuff to paint it with, and I chucked in a quart of red ink that had been shipped to me by mistake. It made such a hit with the critturs that I had to send to Fort Benton for a case of it. The red ink brand of liquor was my long suit after that.'

"There were things to remind you of the days when all the trade of the Northwest came up the Missouri in steamboats. We passed tons and tons of rusted mining machinery on the banks, where boats had blown up or run aground and abandoned the stuff. And once we drifted by a big stern-wheeler squatted in a field where the river had left it thirty-odd years ago. A lot of half-breeds had knocked doors and windows in the sides and were living in clover.

"I shudder some when I think of what happened to me at Piermont, where we camped over night. The town consisted of a store and a saloon run by a man named Blocker. Once in a while a bunch of cow-punchers rode in and grabbed Piermont by the back of the neck and shook it up. This was the only excuse for Piermont. Blocker had a wonderful system of handling the drunken cow-puncher. When he had gambled away all his money, Blocker would

---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

amble out and look over his saddle pony and offer so many chips for the same. When the pony had been blown in, he would liquidate a few on the saddle and blankets. When the pilgrim was stripped to his hide and due to make some trouble about it, Blocker would fill him up to the nozzle with booze, put him gently in a little boat and ferry him across the Missouri. Depositing the unfortunate cow-puncher in the sagebush, the good-hearted Blocker left a quart of whiskey beside him, kissed him on the feverish brow and left him there to sleep it off.

“ I was a little uneasy about the tumultuous reputation of Piermont when I wandered into this metropolis all by myself, for my partner stayed with the boat. I floated into the saloon and was getting on sociably with the barkeeper when the most terrible-looking man I ever saw in my life clattered in from the street. He looked like quick death and he sounded like a shelf falling in a hardware store. He was big and tall and wide and his hair was long and black and the ends of his black mustache drooped down past his chin, and he glared in a way that would positively sicken you. He was decorated with a Winchester and two six-shooters, and a knife outside. I don't know what he had tucked away in his clothes. I threw my liquor down quick, saying to myself:

“ ‘ This is probably the last drink of whisky you'll live to enjoy, my son. This is the original Bad Man you've read about. I thought he was extinct, but

---

## *The Greater America*

---

here he is, all right, and he's just holding off to decide whether he'll carve you or perforate you or eat you raw.'

"Of course, if you or I had seen this person in a Wild West show, we'd have set him down as a counterfeit, or a fossilized curio. But he was on a stamping ground of a good many bad characters who used to round-up in these little camps along the Missouri, and you can find some of them there yet who change their names so often that they can't remember whose mail to ask for if they ever ride in to a post-office. Maybe my story is wandering a little, but that's because I hate to come right down to it and confess how scared I was. When this most ferocious man looked at me I shivered. When he spoke to me I came so near jumping out of my boots that I found the uppers were ripped loose from the soles next morning.

" 'What the hell and blue blazes are you doin' here?' he roared at me.

"Of course I said the most suicidal thing that could be imagined, being rattled. I didn't want to tell him that I was looking for a lost mine for fear he'd think I had money. And I didn't look much like a cow-man. So can you guess the rash and idiotic conversation I produced from my addled think-tank? I stammered:

" 'I'm looking up a sheep ranch for a friend of mine.'

---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

"You'd have thought I'd tried to drag him over the bar by his ropy mustaches, he was that insulted. He got red in the face and stamped his feet and he grabbed both his guns and rared and pitched something frightful. When he could get his breath he hollered:

"*'Sheep, Sheep!* If there's anything I despise worse than rattlesnakes and horned toads it's *Sheep* and *Sheep-men*. Me drink in the same room with a *Sheep-man!* Wow, Wow, blankety-blank your double-blankety-blank heart.'

"Bang, bang!

"With that he cuts loose and shoots some lead into the floor and shoots some more through the window and tries to bust the lamp and misses it and froths at the mouth and is dancing nearer to me with every whoop and every bang.

"The red-headed barkeep didn't pull a gun, as I was hoping he'd do, for I hadn't the sign of a weapon, and I was too paralyzed to run. He ducked behind the bar and says to me in a hoarse whisper:

"*'Kick him in the belly, Sport. He's got high-heeled boots on and he'll fall over backward. Then jump on his face. Kick him one in the belt. He's bound to topple over.'*

"The advice might have been sound, but by this time I found I had a pair of legs that belonged to me, and I put them in motion and sailed out of the door. As I flew I could hear the Bad Man roaring

---

## *The Greater America*

---

death to all sheep-men and shooting up the bottles on the bar. By luck I ran into a cow-puncher as I was making a sneak for the river, and I told him about the human tornado that was laying waste the hamlet of Piermont.

“ ‘ Oh, shucks! ’ said he, in a tone of deep disgust. ‘ Is *he* loose again. Come back with me. ’

“ I trailed along about six paces in the rear, but the cow-man never hesitated. I got inside the saloon in time to see him grab the Bad Man around the neck, point him toward the street and kick him every step of the way to a gully about thirty yards from the building. Then he took the arsenal off the fallen hero, slapped his face and left him there.

“ We walked back to have a drink, and the cow-puncher remarked:

“ ‘ He don’t mean no real harm. He’s the cook at the N-Bar-N ranch, and that’s his way of amusing himself. He think’s he’s a bad man, but he’s only a rotten bad cook. He’s annoying to strangers, but I spanked him good, and I don’t think he’ll run no more whizzers for a while. ’

“ We got kind of chummy over a few drinks and he told me about another cook of a near-by ranch, who also failed to get away with a play in the same saloon of Piermont.

“ ‘ It reminds me of the time when Nigger Bob got run out of town by Old Man Miller, ’ he began. ‘ Nigger Bob was big and strong, a whale of a man,



---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

and pretty bad when the booze was in him. Miller was a little wizened cuss past sixty, but game as a pebble. He was married to a squaw, and had a little hay ranch down the river a ways. One night he blew into this saloon, meek and mild, and sayin' nothin' to nobody. Nigger Bob was givin' it out loud and ugly that he had no use for a squaw-man, and he'd like nothing better than to round one up and tell him what he thought of him, and a whole lot of other promiscuous cussin' of squaw-men in general.

" ' He wanted to have some fun with Miller, never thinkin' the poor old man would have the nerve to take it up. The old man huddled against the bar, growin' paler and whiter and chewin' his gray mustache. Finally he piped up :

" " " I'm married to a squaw."

" " " Any man that 'ud marry a squaw is three degrees worse than a hoss-thief," yelled Nigger Bob.

" " The old man sidled to the middle of the room and looked up at Nigger Bob, who was grinnin' like a wolf.

" " " You'll have to take that back or fight," squeaks Miller, and calls him names that were fairly blisterin'.

" " Nigger Bob tells him :

" " " It's you that's got to apologize or fight now, you ——— little squaw-lover, you."

" " " I'm too old to fight, and I won't take nothin' back," says Miller.

“ ‘ It’s a kind of a deadlock for a minute, and the boys try to coax Miller out of the room. But the old man won’t have it. At last he slowly peels off his coat and says:

“ ‘ ‘ I’ll fight.”

“ ‘ ‘ Nobody wanted to see the row go any farther, but the next thing that happened was that Nigger Bob grabbed the old man by the neck, flung him across his knee and spanked him. The old man was white as a sheet and his eyes were full of tears as he picked himself up and crawled out without another word.

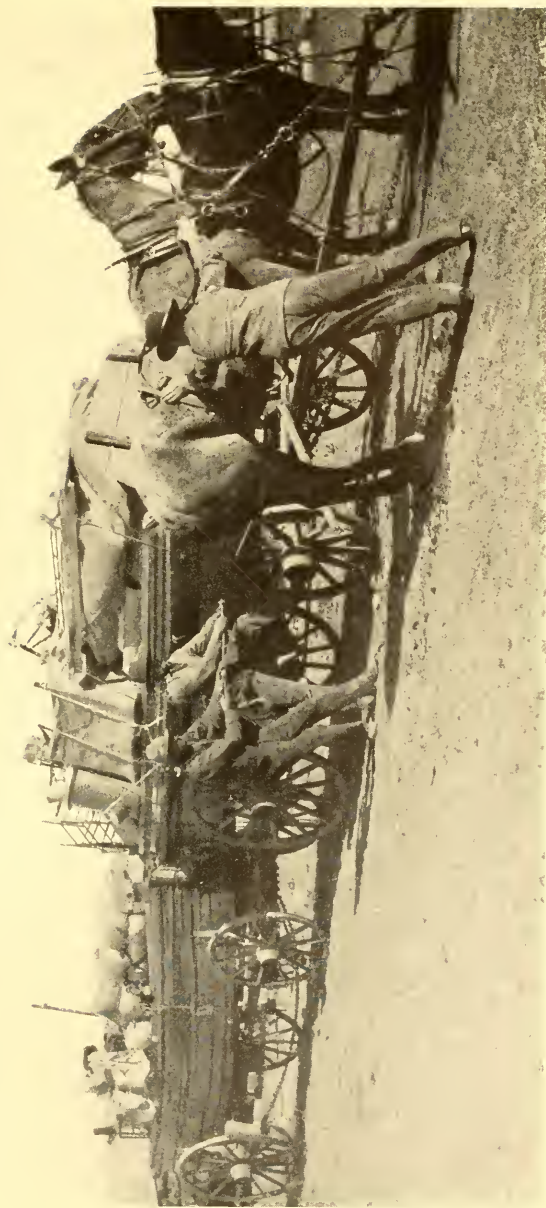
“ ‘ ‘ After he was gone, one of the boys remarked to Nigger Bob, who was laughing fit to split himself:

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ This is a d—n sight more than a joke. Do you know where Miller’s gone? ”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ Gone to bed, I reckon.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ He’s gone for his Winchester, and he’s going to kill you just as sure as sunrise is due to-morrow.”

“ ‘ ‘ ‘ Everybody looked so serious that Nigger Bob stopped laughin’, and then his nerve began to ooze away. He waited about five minutes and then floated out. He wasn’t gone more than ten minutes before the barrel of a Winchester showed in the door closely pursued by Old Man Miller, with his cheek against the stock and his finger on the trigger. He poked the barrel along the wall till he’d covered every man without finding Nigger Bob. Then he drifted away, and for one solid month he does nothing but wear out



*The first time in harness*



---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

horses looking for Nigger Bob. He never does get him, for that coon jumped the country that very night, and he never did stop running. Nobody's ever seen hide or hair of him since.'

"All of which has mighty little to do with the Charley Keyes mine, but I guess it was as near as we came to finding it. However, I'm drifting along toward it, so don't get impatient. We worked out all our signs, and found the Musselshell and where old Fort Copeland used to be and we shaded our eyes and looked south and said, 'There's my country,' and marched two sleeps and didn't sleep two winks. Our directions, which sounded mighty hopeful and definite at long range, kind of lost themselves when it came to prospecting every inch of ground within 'two sleeps' of the south bank of the Missouri. We stuck at it for two months, wore ourselves to a frazzle, and couldn't find a color. Charley Keyes may have lost a mine, but we didn't find it, and it was an awful big batch of landscape to mislay a mine in, you can bet on that.

"Well, after we were discouraged and getting very peevish and short with each other, we made back tracks for Fort Benton, leaving behind us two worn-out gold-pans and a busted shovel. If you're not too weary please listen to the joyous sequel. By and by a blacksmith on a ranch over toward the Big Snowy Mountains thinks he'll take a whirl at looking for the treasure of the dead and gone Keyes

---

## *The Greater America*

---

person. He was an old prospector, and he had been brooding over this lost mine proposition for some five years or so. In fact he was a little disordered that way. He roamed around the Musselshell country until he ran across the rusty gold-pans and the shovel we had left behind. With that he goes clean up in the air, is cock-sure that these relics belonged to the late lamented Charley Keyes and that he had found IT. He turns up in Glasgow, a cow-town to the northward, and can't keep his precious secret. He'll blow into a thousand fragments if he don't spread the glad tidings, and in due time I get a telegram from my partner, who is up in that section:

“ ‘Come at once and avoid the rush. The mine is found.’ ”

“ In my blissful ignorance I think we'll have a chance to beat out the stampede because we've been over the ground, and I hustle off to meet my partner, wondering who found the mine and how he found it, and never connecting it for a minute with those foolish pieces of hardware we had left in the wilderness. We pack down to the Musselshell, fairly sweating under the collar, and find out, of course, what started the excitement.

“ It wouldn't be decent to try to tell you how disgusted we were. We knew there was no gold in the district, but as sure as I sit here there was a town of a thousand people sprouted up around our old gold-pans and shovels and they were coming in

---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

by hundreds every day and making the dirt fly like a locoed colony of prairie dogs.

“ ‘ Alexander City ’ was the name of the town, in honor of the crazy blacksmith who was responsible for it. We were going to quit and go about our lawful business again, but the leading citizens wouldn’t let us. They argued that we were the wise men of the camp, that we knew these diggings like a book, and that the town needed us. We didn’t dare to tell them there was no gold anywhere near this fine big collection of lunatics, for fear they would lynch us. So I suggested to my party that we sink a shaft anyway. It would keep us busy and the crowd interested and make a diversion so that we could sneak away.

“ We went down sixty feet, cussing freely at the foolishness of the whole performance. Then we washed for color and we didn’t get a show of it. Alexander City was a busted boom. But Alexander City wasn’t allowed to know it quite yet. We were almost busted ourselves and self-preservation was entitled to draw cards in that game. We jollied the population along by running a cross-cut in our shaft, and at the same time we worked some other claims after a pattern devised by my partner.

“ He had brought along a nugget in his clothes, to tuck away as a cash reserve in case of urgent need. We would first open up a prospect on one of our claims and wait for a tenderfoot. When Providence

---

## *The Greater America*

---

sent him our way seeking a location we would offer to let him dig in one of our prospect holes upon the solemn promise that he'd give us everything he found. This was the way to let him see that the country was good, and if he found gold, then he'd have a tip to steer him about locating somewhere near our claim.

"The pilgrim naturally wanted to make sure that there was gold in the camp, and he most cheerfully accepted the proposition, agreeing, mind you, to give us any gold he found on our property.

"Meanwhile my partner's nugget had been carefully salted in the bottom of the hole.

"Then one of us would hide behind a screen of sage-brush and watch the victim dig. It was easy telling when he found the nugget, for he couldn't conceal his agitation, and generally we could see him stow it away in his clothes. Then we would jump him and ask him whether he had found anything. Of course he would deny it, and then we'd search him and find the nugget inside his shirt.

"It would not do to let the camp know that a thief had been found in its midst. It was explained to the victim that lynching was a certainty if he was exposed, and the case was settled out of court. My partner had been made a justice of the peace for Alexander City and he collected a ten-dollar fine from the guilty tenderfoot, and the costs were taken out in drinks.



---

---

## *The Lost Charley Keyes Mine*

---

“Does it sound like a hold-up? Not a bit of it. We put our trust in these strangers, we had their word that they would be square with us and they tried to hog our nugget.

“We did our little toward making virtuous men of them. If we had not punished them they might have gone on and become presidents of big life insurance companies.

“Alexander City faded swiftly away, you couldn’t find its remains to-day, but the Charley Keyes mine is still there. And men will be looking for it after you and I are dead and gone.”

## CHAPTER XI

### THE COW-PUNCHER VERSUS IRRIGATION

OTHER days in the open range were made bright in memory by long rides over the crisp, brown buffalo grass; and other nights were enlivened by stories of a life that is almost gone, as told in the blankets around the camp fires. Then the scene shifted to another kind of life which seemed tame and colorless by contrast, but in which can be glimpsed not the past, but the future of this North country.

In Williston, North Dakota, just beyond the Montana boundary line, I found the men who stand for the new order of things. Some of them were dressed in khaki, leather puttees and campaign hats, with a military smartness of bearing. They were not army men, but the scouts of the peaceful invasion that is crowding back our dashing heroes of the lariat and the branding iron. This engineer's party of the Government Reclamation Service had come to discuss with the people of that region an irrigation project involving forty thousand acres of lands now used for wheat-growing and grazing. The gathering was like an old-fashioned "town-meeting" in New England. A hall was filled to overflowing with farmers and townsmen who pressed around a table on which was spread a map of the near-by country. Leaning



*The new king of the cattle range*



---

## *The Cow-Puncher Versus Irrigation*

---

over it was the Supervising Engineer from Washington. The proceedings were in the nature of a heart-to-heart talk between Uncle Sam and his children.

The paternal government was willing to advance the funds needed to increase the value of their lands twenty- and thirty-fold if a fair bargain could be struck with the owners. This was a minor project compared with the greater irrigation schemes in progress elsewhere in the arid West, but it was no less significant and interesting. Impressive facts, arrayed in terms of millions of dollars and acres, make rather bloodless reading, unless you can get behind them at the men and women concerned, whose essential joys and hopes and sorrows are little different from your own. Therefore this little assemblage in a small town of the Northwest appealed more to the imagination than the sight of some stupendous masonry dam impounding heaven knows how many millions of gallons of water in a corner of the Arizona desert.

Here was a handful of hardy-looking men, just plain American farmers, who had won their holdings from a wilderness and carried their burdens without help. They were hoping for a verdict which would increase the value of their land from five dollars to one hundred dollars an acre. The government proposed to lend them nearly a million dollars without interest to put the water on their land. They must

---

## *The Greater America*

---

agree to repay the loan, twenty dollars for each acre, in ten yearly installments. It would be easy to pay this from the greatly increased production. You would think that these farmers of Williston would jump to grasp such a magnificent benefaction. The Supervising Engineer looked up from his map and said:

“It is the wish of the government that these irrigated lands shall be cultivated to the best advantage. It has been found in other reclaimed areas that eighty acres is as much land as one man can make highly productive. It is probable that the future will show forty acres to be the most effective farming unit.”

The postmaster replied in behalf of his fellow-citizens:

“We are the fellows that suffered the hardships to get and keep our land. We came into this country as pioneers, and settled it, and we have hung on by the skin of our teeth through thick and thin. We deserve all we can get. Most of us have quarter sections, and we think we can handle our hundred and sixty acres and make money on the deal. It would not be fair to cut us down to eighty acres. The smaller the farm the more settlers will come in, that is true. But let *us* have the benefits of the irrigation project. We are used to big farms. We need lots of land. But the main question is, do we get the water?”

---

## *The Cow-Puncher Versus Irrigation*

---

Thus spoke the independent American to his government, sticking up for what he believed belonged to him. The bigger question at stake was whether the government would approve the general project. This was what these people were breathless to know. Think what it meant to them. Sure crops, certain incomes, so swift an expansion of settlement that it would read like a fairy tale in any other country, every man's possessions swelled thirty-fold by the stroke of a pen in the hand of the Secretary of the Interior. After all, this meeting was as dramatic, in its own fashion, as the fall round-up a hundred miles away. The Supervising Engineer announced with dignified deliberation:

"In behalf of the Reclamation Service, I have decided to recommend the Williston project to the approval of the Secretary. His word is final, but we have gone over the ground very thoroughly, and I see no reason why you may not expect a favorable action at Washington. Your co-operation, as shown by the contracts signed, makes this a most promising undertaking."

There was much shaking of hands and a few cheers. A lone cow-puncher on the sidewalk, who had seemed lost in such company, let out an exultant whoop.

"Right here is where I draw cards," he shouted to a friend. "I found a vein of coal while I was riding range. I made my location and I'm surely

---

## *The Greater America*

---

in on the ground floor. The pumping plant to lift the water from the Missouri and put it on the bench lands will have to be staked out near my land. And I'm the boy to supply the coal. Here's one cow-man you punkin-rollers can't put out of business."

In the heart of the Montana range is the Milk River Valley, a land of fertile farming soil three hundred miles long and sixty miles wide. Most of it was an Indian reservation until fifteen years ago. Since then it has been opened for settlement, and among the earliest pilgrims of the plow was a colony of Eastern farmers who founded the town of Chinook on the Great Northern, and spread around it along the valley. Upon this empty piece of cattle range has grown a town of two thousand people, with brick blocks, two school buildings, three churches and three hotels. Its business contributes a quarter of a million dollars a year in freight receipts.

Chinook is an important shipping point for cattle and sheep, and the cow-puncher and the shambling herder with his faithful dogs mingle in the streets with the farmer who has brought to town a load of beets or alfalfa seed. The Chinook farmers who flung this outpost into the middle of the open range did not wait for government irrigation projects. They sturdily banded together, men and teams, dug their own ditches, and made land that had been worth a few cents an acre to the stock-men yield





*Pioneer irrigation*



---

## *The Cow-Puncher Versus Irrigation*

---

from eighteen to twenty-five dollars a year in hay, wheat, fruit and alfalfa.

They showed what could be done with the sleeping resources of the Milk River Valley. Now the government is planning mightily to reinforce the work they so manfully began, and irrigation projects have been surveyed which will sweep twelve thousand square miles into the golden zone of cultivation. The future will see more than a hundred thousand families, each with a hundred and sixty acre farm, filling this Milk River Valley from end to end. In this one corner of the State of Montana irrigation will increase the value of these open grazing lands more than fifty million dollars.

The alarmist swears the country is going to the dogs when a few rascals in high places are exposed. But he does not know, or he pays no heed, when ten thousand honest men quietly go forth to build their homes in new places, and thereby clinch just so many more rivets in the keel of the American Ship of State.

As the frontier passes, the nation waxes stronger and more unified, and the right arm of the Future is strengthened to deal with the problems that vex the Present.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE HEART OF THE BIG TIMBER COUNTRY

LUMBERING is the chief industry of that vast region bounded on the north by Alaska, on the south by California, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the east by the Rocky Mountains. In this territory, known as the Pacific Northwest, nearly two hundred thousand men are employed in cutting down the last primeval forests of this country, and slicing these stately armies of spruce and fir and cedar into five billion feet of lumber and six billion shingles every year.

This prodigious activity has built up cities and States and launched a mighty commerce. Its allied industries directly support half a million people. This timbered area is the richest natural treasure of the American continent, compared with which the gold mines of Alaska and Nevada are of picayune value for this and for coming generations. It is so wonderfully rich a treasure that its owners are squandering it like drunken spendthrifts. In these mighty western forests a billion feet of lumber is wasted every year, enough to build one hundred thousand comfortable American homes.

"Do these people ever think of the centuries through which their harvest has been growing?"

---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

implores a western man with the interests of his State at heart. "Does it never occur to them that they are the trustees of a heritage for future generations, to be guarded, cared for and watched, to be used only as necessity requires or price justifies, and not to be wantonly wasted or destroyed, or disposed of without adequate return? And how are they fulfilling their trust. They are leaving half their crop in the woods to be burned, and for the half they are marketing they are obtaining a beggarly return. They are leaving the ground a fire-swept, desolate waste. They are taking to themselves the whole of the heritage intrusted to them. The sacred right of property is theirs, and they do as they will with their own."

The ancient woods of New England and Michigan and Minnesota have been stripped of their heavy growth by the logger; the white pine already belongs with the past, and a country which has been wont to consider its natural resources inexhaustible can foresee the end of its timber supply within the next century unless the forests are replanted and cared for. It is very hard for the American of this generation to realize that there can be any end to the wealth of the land and the forests and the mines which have done so much to make this country what it is.

It is possible, however, to see American enterprise and headlong haste after quick returns attacking the "last stand of the big timber" with an energy that

---

## *The Greater America*

---

is fairly infernal. A thousand mills, and fleets of steam and sail are waiting for this harvest, and yet it is tragic and almost pitiful to think that the future is being robbed of great treasures for the sake of a little profit in hand, and that a nation's birthright is being sold for a mess of pottage.

It is characteristic of western men and methods that the ways of logging in the East should have been flung aside as crude and slow. The giant timber of the Washington forests on the slopes of the Cascades is not hauled by teams or rafted down rivers. Steam has made of logging a business which devastates the woods with incredible speed, system, and ardor. The logging camps of the Cascades differ as strikingly from the lumbering centers of northern New England as the electric gold-dredgers of the Sacramento Valley contrast with the placer diggings of the Forty-niners. In other words, the greater the need of preserving the forests, the greater is the American ingenuity for turning them into cash as fast as possible.

The camp where I found these up-to-date lumbermen tearing the heart out of one of the noblest forests in America was near the Skykomish River in Washington, where this mountain stream winds through the foothills of the western slopes of the Cascade Range. We set out from Everett in the early morning and left the train at a raw little town called Sultan. Beyond the town was the wreckage of the

---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

forest, blackened patches where the fire had swept in the wake of the loggers, miles of gaunt and melancholy trunks spared by the ax to die in flame and smoke. Beyond this devastated area rose the mountains, still clothed with trees, far up to the rocky heights, whose bare outline was fleeced with snow and wreathed in mists and clouds.

In a near-by clearing was the camp of the lumbermen, a row of bunk-houses, a kitchen and a big dining-room. The buildings were of sawed lumber, because this material was easier to handle than logs, so that there was nothing picturesque in this first glimpse of the Pacific lumberman at work. His settlement looked like the beginnings of a frontier town.

Past the camp ran a single-track railroad which wound up through a gash in the bold hills, twisting like a snake, climbing hills that would tire a pack train. It spanned ravines on crazy wooden trestles, and cut corners at impossible angles. No civilized locomotive could be expected to operate on this track, but presently a squat, broad-shouldered dwarf of an engine scuttled down from the hills with a train-load of logs behind it, and proceeded to show how singularly adapted it was for the work in hand. It was a deformed, one-sided looking monster, built for power, not for speed. The boiler was not hung over the center of its trucks, but sat well on the starboard side. Instead of driving-rods, a shaft was

---

## *The Greater America*

---

geared along one side, cogged and geared to every wheel, drivers and trucks, so that when the shaft turned and the gearing took hold, every wheel of this little giant bit hold of the rail, and pushed, or held back with concentrated energy.

Soon this lop-sided toiler towed us up among the hills, away from the wreckage of the forest, and plunged into the green and towering vistas of Douglas fir and red cedar and fragrant spruce. Part of this tract had been cut over, and the refuse might have marked the trail of a cyclone. But the "culls" left standing were majestic in size. They had been passed by as not worth felling. Two months before I had been loafing along the Kennebec River, watching the tail end of the spring drive float down from the woods of northern Maine. Alas, most of that harvest had been sapling logs, toothpicks in size, for the pulp mills. The biggest of the timber logs of that Maine drive, looked like kindlings compared with these neglected "culls" of the Washington forest.

When the logging train trailed into the virgin woods, the straight, clean trunks of standing timber were like the columns of a wonderful cathedral. Their spreading tops were more than two hundred feet in air, the branches clothed with moss like green velvet. Through their canopy of verdure the sunlight sifted, far down to the dense undergrowth of salmon-berry, tall ferns and other shrubs spreading



---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

in an almost impenetrable mass. Many of the trees which made this splendid picture had been growing in their solitude for three or four hundred years. Now they were doomed to be destroyed by puny, bustling, swearing men with saws and axes, assailants who were tapping at their grand butts like so many woodpeckers. Mingled with the staccato tapping of the distant axes was the "rasp-rasp" of the sawyers, gnawing their way through in less than an hour that which it had taken God Almighty to perfect since the time when Columbus found this continent of ours.

Presently a spur or branch line zig-zagged off from the railroad. The squat and laboring locomotive crawled along this side track, which was laid on top of the ground with so little grading that the rails billowed up and down the hills. The toot of the locomotive was answered by the scream of another whistle somewhere ahead, as if there were a bustling activity beyond the curtaining trees. The foreman of the "outfit" was waiting to go to the end of the "spur," and he swung himself aboard from a handy log alongside the track. He was a quiet young man with a frank gray eye, a square jaw and a fine pair of shoulders. He explained in reply to many questions:

"I've got a gang of a hundred Irish, Swedes and Americans, and most of them get drunk whenever they get a chance. No, they aren't always easy to

---

## *The Greater America*

---

handle, but if you let little things worry you, you'll go crazy, so what's the use? I was raised in Michigan logging camps, and this getting timber out by steam power is different. I had to learn the business all over again when I came out to the coast. We run these spurs off the main line about every fourteen hundred feet, two of them off each side, parallel, you understand. Then we log between the two spurs, giving us a seven hundred foot haul either way to the flat cars. When we're through, we pull up our tracks and push ahead and then run the spurs off to the left and right in the same fashion. If you've been used to seeing logging with ox teams and sleds, you'll have a chance to see some real live action when you've watched the donkey-engine at work."

His forecast was most conservative. Logging by steam, as it is done in the Cascades, is worth going many miles to see as a hair-raising spectacle. When the train toiled into a clearing, the donkey-engine stood near the track and the skidway which led to the loading platform. It was a commonplace looking "donkey," although bigger than most of its breed which puff and strain on docks and at the foot of derricks. The boiler and engine were mounted on a massive timber sled, whose runners or underpinnings were two weighty logs. This timber raft had a blunt bow and a snub nose where the runners had been hewn away, like the front end of a New England "stone-boat." Stout guy-ropes ran to near-by

---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

trees, mooring the "donkey" as if it were an unruly kind of a beast. In front of the engine was a series of drums, wound round with wire cable which trailed off into the forest and vanished.

The area across which these cables trailed was littered with windfalls, tall butts, sawed-off tops and branches, upturned roots fifteen feet in air. Huge logs, cut in lengths of from twenty-five to forty feet, loomed amid this woodland wreckage like the backs of a school of whales in a tumbling sea. No roads had been cut. It seemed impossible to move these great sections of trees to the railroad and thence to market. Teaming was out of the question in such a ruck as this.

The only appliances in sight were the humble "donkey," and the aimless wire-cable which led off into the general tangle of things. Closer inspection showed a signal rope which led from the whistle of the "donkey" off into the woods without visible destination. Some one out of vision yanked this six hundred feet of rope. The "donkey" screamed a series of intelligent blasts. The engine clattered, the drums began to revolve and the wire cable which seemed to wind off to nowhere in particular grew taut. The "donkey" surged against its moorings, its massive sled began to rear and pitch as if it were striving to bury its nose in the earth.

There was a startling uproar in the forest, wholly beyond seeing distance, mind you. It sounded as if

trees were being pulled up by the roots. The "donkey" was puffing and tugging at its anchorage as if it had suddenly undertaken to jerk out the side of the mountain. In a moment a log came hurtling out of the undergrowth nearly a thousand feet away. It was a section of tree six feet through, a diameter greater than the height of most men. It was forty feet long, and it must have weighed a large number of tons.

It burst into sight as if it had wings, smashing and tearing its own pathway. The "donkey" was not merely dragging it at the end of a wire cable a quarter of a mile long, it was yanking it home hand over fist. The great log was coming so fast that when it fetched athwart a stump it pitched over it as if it were taking a hurdle. Then it became entangled with another whopper of a log, as big as itself. The two locked arms, they did not even hesitate, and both came lunging toward the "donkey" and the railroad.

The "donkey" did not complain of this extra burden. It veered sidewise as if to get a fresh grip, reared a trifle more viciously, coughed and grunted, and jerked the burden along with undiminished vigor. It is an awesome sight to see a log six feet through and forty feet long bounding toward you as if the devil were in it, breaking off small trees as if they were twigs, leaping over obstacles, gouging a way for itself with terrific uproar.

I waited until the log was within twenty feet of



*"The 'donkey' . . . was yanking it home hand over fist"*





---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

the loading platform, and then, fearful that the "donkey" might forget to let go in the excitement of the moment, I moved rapidly away from the scene of action. The huge missile halted in its flight, and the masterful "donkey" had a breathing spell.

It was time to wonder how they were going to load this unwieldly brute of a log on a flat car. One realized the girth and weight of it when the "chaser" followed it in, and branded it by stamping one end with a sledge hammer. As he stood by the butt of it, the top of the log was well above his head. Now the "head loader," and "loader" assumed command. They deftly rigged slings of wire cable around the log, and the donkey engine was asked to give them a lift. The tireless "donkey" squatted back, made a wild lunge or two before settling in the traces, and the log began to roll over and over up the inclined skidway in the bight of these slings.

A pull here and a tug there, and the log rolled across the platform, and settled in its place on the car, handled by steam and by steam alone from the time when the "fallers" and sawyers had brought it crashing to earth, and cut it into sections.

This was not the limit, however, of the resourcefulness of the "donkey." No sooner had this log been gripped by the back of the neck and flung aboard a car, than the gang back there in the woods had made another log fast to the trailing cable. Not a second was wasted. When the first log settled on

---

## *The Greater America*

---

the car a second was crashing and leaping through the forest. It was even more impressive to learn that when the "yard" is cleared, and it is time to move to another forest tract, the "donkey" loads itself aboard a flat car by a process analogous to that of lifting one's self by the bootstraps. The cables are belayed to convenient trees, the "donkey" takes hold, the drums revolve, and the astute engine hauls itself along until it is close to the loading platform. Now purchases are secured, and the ponderous machinery jerks itself up the skidway prepared for its passage. One more clever effort and it hauls itself across the platform to the car, thus demonstrating itself a "donkey" whose capabilities give the lie to its name.

We followed the cable back into the forest while the coast was clear. There was first the "haulback," a wire rope more than half a mile long, which led in a wide circle through that part of the forest which was being logged by this particular "donkey." This cable is an errand boy for the larger and stronger cable which does the heavy work. The "haulback" leads from the drums of the donkey-engine, turning corners through sheaves made fast to trees, and is thus an endless line which can be reeled out or in to carry the stronger cable whenever it may be needed. It would be a slow and back-breaking task for men to pull the big cable through such a tangle of forest as this. Therefore they hitch a length of it on to



---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

the "haulback," the "donkey" kindly assists, and deposits the gear just in the right spot. Then the "hook tenders" and "rigging slingers" fall to, and pass the heavy cable, or "lead," around the end of the log, making it fast with big steel hooks which bite deep into the shaggy bark.

Thus harnessed, there is no more use for the "haulback" cable, and the "donkey" reels in the bigger cable with the log at the end much as one handles a fish that is securely hooked. Ahead of this gang are the "windfall buckers," who saw into handy lengths such fallen trees as are square in the way. These are jerked aside by a "lead" from the big cable, but it is not considered necessary to clear the path any more carefully than by the removal of these most conspicuous obstacles.

The men work in a dense and damp undergrowth, in mud and slime up to their knees when the autumn rains fall for months on end. It is slippery, trying work, and when the steel hooks lose their grip, and the lengths of cable whip blindly through the air, and the log runs amuck before the ardent "donkey" can be checked, there is such vivid and varied profanity as cannot be found outside a polygot lumber camp in the untamed West.

This part of the logging industry in the Cascades is essentially business-like and specialized. It lacks romance, although the method of it is filled with dashing and picturesque energy. If you would see

---

## *The Greater America*

---

the tragedy of the big woods, you must wander a little back from the "donkey's" area of infernal activity. Down the columned aisles of these noble trees there rings a long, deep call:

"Look out of the r-o-a-d."

It is the warning signal of the sawyer, the dirge of a big tree which is about to fall. From a few hundred feet away there is a fierce crackling like the volley firing of rifles. The fibers of the giant are being torn asunder. A mighty green crest more than two hundred feet in air begins to sway ever so slightly as if moved by a big wind. Then comes a long-drawn, rending crash, gathering volume as the heart of the tree is ripped in twain. Now the top of the tree, far up in the bright sunlight, begins to move toward the earth, very slowly. It seems a long time before it gathers headway and begins to crash in a sweeping arc down among the trees around and beneath it. The air is full of torn branches and fragments of the smaller trees that are in the shattering path of this fall.

So fast is the flight of the tree as its mass picks up momentum that the wind wails through its top, and the sound of it can be heard afar. There is a vast, solemn groaning sound, and then with the noise of thunder the tree smites the ground, and the earth trembles. It is an impressive spectacle for the layman who is not figuring how many feet of lumber this prostrate monarch will yield. Nor does it cheer

---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

him to learn that one of these great trees is worth only fifty dollars to the logger, and that when it reaches the mill it will be cut up into ten thousand feet of lumber.

When it is down, the "buckers" attack it. With one man on each end of a long and limber saw, the tree is soon cut into handy lengths, ready for the wire cable and the obstreperous donkey-engine. Perched high on their spring-boards set in notches made in the butt six or eight feet above ground, the "fallers" are at work, nibbling at other great trees before the saws come into play, for these trees are sawed, not chopped down, and the ax does only the preliminary work. Twenty trees are felled every working day by the crew of two "fallers" and one "undercutter," twenty trees, together worth a thousand dollars as they fall.

Fifty men work in each gang, and two "yards" are being cleared at the same time, so that a hundred men toil to keep the two donkey-engines and the railroad spurs busy. Between forty and fifty big trees come down in the day's work of the "outfit." They are a strong and hustling lot of men. Logging by steam admits of no leisurely methods. The gangs are kept on the jump to measure pace with the "donkey" and the busy little railroad, and profits are so small at best that no time can be wasted. The boss drives his crews, but he feeds and pays them well, and they have no snow-bound winters to fight.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

When the day's work was over in the "yards" we visited, the men came flocking from the woods to board the train that was waiting to carry them down to the camp at the foot of the hills. They were rough and husky men, ready for a fight or a frolic, but the quiet young foreman with the gray eye and square jaw held their respectful attention whenever he joined a group on the swaying flat cars. Most of the cars were piled high with logs, and the broad-shouldered, lop-sided little engine had to hold back with all its might to prevent the train from running away with it.

We slowed up at another "yard" where a spur of track led to a loading platform. Here an unwearied "donkey" was engaged in its last task of the long day. It was perched on the crest of a hill beyond which the cleared land pitched down to a shallow pond. Across the pond a trail opened into the dense forest, a trail furrowed like an irrigating ditch. Down the hill, through the pond, and along the furrowed ditch ran the wire cable, taut and humming as the "donkey" pulled it home.

It was a matter of minutes while we waited and looked at the opening in the woods. Then the log heaved in sight, riding grandly through the shadows like a sentient monster. It charged out of the woods, hurling earth and stones before it. On top of it stood a logger, swaying easily, shifting his footing to meet the plunges of his great beast, a dare-devil

---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

figure of a man outlined against the sunset sky as the log flew down hill. Before it dived into the pond he made a flying leap, and tumbled into the undergrowth with a yell of pure enjoyment. Then the log tore through the pond amid a whirlwind of spray, and moved up the opposite slope to the end of its long journey.

Fully as heroic as the figure of the logger on the riding home was the man perched above the groaning drums of the donkey-engine. He handled his straining cables and machinery in a fashion to suggest the management of an elephant by means of a walking-stick. When the tooting signals came to him that all was ready somewhere out in the woods, he let the "haulback" unwind, and then tightened the pull on the big cable and made ready for action. When the signal came that meant "go ahead," he threw his lever over, and a hundred horse power surged into being not by easy gradation, but with a fierce and sudden jump. It was like starting a heavy train by throwing the throttle wide open. It was taken for granted that everything would hold together, and, *mirabile dictu*, it did. And when the log moved, it was with the power of a hundred horses jumping into their collars as one and starting on the gallop. The most vivid impression of the day among the big timber was made by the "donkey-engine" as used in modern logging. It (I was going to say "he") is an uproarious embodiment of the

---

## *The Greater America*

---

American spirit in action, with no time for sentiment. The "donkey" reckons not of the tragedy of the big trees. It rolls up its sleeves and proceeds to get results or break its back in the attempt.

In a hundred valleys of the Far West and along a hundred hillsides the logger is tearing the forest to pieces by these twentieth century methods. He picks out the choicest timber for slaughter, leaves the remainder to be burned by the fires which follow his crews, and is making desolation in the noblest wilderness left to the American nation. He has invested money in the ownership of timber lands. He is unwilling to let this investment lie idle. The only way in which he can get returns is by cutting timber, and he is not to be harshly blamed for wishing to realize on his investment. He has been criminally wasteful and careless, and he is beginning to see the folly of his ways.

His spirit of extravagance and contempt for the future has been of a piece with the handling of the public domain as if Uncle Sam and his people could never come to the end of their rope. The demand for timber is enormous, and the men who possess it are average, hard-working Americans who want to make a success of the business in which their dollars and their industry are staked.

There is a class of sentimentalists who make outcry against all destruction of forests, as if lumber could be made in a mill and not from trees. Vast

---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

as is the production of the forests of the Pacific Northwest, the annual cut amounts in board measure to only twice as much as the annual consumption of timber for railroad ties alone in the United States. About two hundred railroad ties is the average yield of forest per acre, and to replace the worn-out ties and lay new track for one year means the stripping of one half million acres of American forest. Bridge timbers, telegraph poles, etc., swell this demand to a million acres of forest, cut down each year to maintain American railroads. And railroad ties are a small item in the total consumption of lumber.

One of the most hopeful signs of the times is the changing attitude of the lumbermen toward the science of forestry as fostered by the Federal Government. They are beginning to see that their industry is doomed to an early extinction unless the wastage is checked and the forest is renewed for future generations. And more than this, unless the forests are preserved, vast tracts of fertile and prosperous America will become desert in the next century. This is a lesson taught by such countries as Tunis, now a part of the North African desert, which in old times was a smiling and populous garden. An Arab chronicler relates that "in those days one could walk from Tunis to Tripoli in the shade." The Arab conquest destroyed the forest, and the desert swept over the face of the land.

It is difficult to realize that all attempts to educate



---

## *The Greater America*

---

the present-day American in the value of forest preservation fly in the face of the teachings of his immediate forefathers. In an address delivered at the American Forest Congress last year, this change of national view-point was put in a striking manner:

"No reasonable man would be disposed to denounce the early settlers of the timbered portions of North America for cutting away the forests. Cleared land was necessary for the growing of food products which were needed to sustain life. A man with a family by a courageous enterprise, or by the force of circumstances, projected into the wilderness, would not hesitate to cut down and clear off the tree growth as rapidly as his strength permitted. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and the pioneers in our forest areas had to clear the land or starve. Moreover, in the early period of settlement he was considered the greatest benefactor of the State, and to the community in which he lived, who slashed down the most forest and cleared the most land. There was no thought of the future value of timber. It was a cumberer of the ground, like ledges of rock and the loose stones of the glacial drift. The lumberman was not a devastator, but performed a useful function by removing that which, as it stood, had little or no value."

The lumbermen of to-day, realizing that our grandfathers attacked the timber as an enemy rather than a friend, are asking: "How can I cut my





*" Huge logs . . . loomed amid this woodland wreckage "*



---

## *The Heart of the Big Timber Country*

---

timber now, and at the same time grow a new crop for future supply? ” The Forestry Bureau at Washington, under the notably efficient direction of Gifford Pinchot, and with the active co-operation of President Roosevelt, is ready to tell the lumberman how to face this problem, and, better yet, offers to send its experts to show him, on the ground, how to cut his timber to the best advantage for present needs and future use.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MAN WHO FOUND HIMSELF

"HELLO, old man."

I faced about at the sound of this greeting voice in the street of a town on the shore of Puget Sound, and saw a tall and sunburned man of a rugged aspect who held out a hand in welcome. There was something very familiar in the boyish smile and the dancing light of his blue eye, but for the moment the "Stetson" hat, the flannel shirt and the corduroy breeches were an effective disguise. While I sparred for time in which to link him with past acquaintance, he observed, with a chuckle:

"The last time we met you blew into my special car to join the gang on the way to the Yale-Harvard game."

Then, of course, I knew him, but he could scarcely blame me for failing to recall him at the first glance, so great was the transformation not only in garb, but in the whole demeanor of the man. Five years before, he had suddenly vanished from the haunts that had known him, nor had any word come back, in all this time, to tell his host of friends in New York that he was still alive. A genial idler, drifting in swift and pleasant currents, he has flung away a fortune in many gilded follies to reap the verdict that "his only enemy was himself." A stalwart

---

## *The Man Who Found Himself*

---

body and a fine mind had been so rapidly losing their keen edge that his friends were beginning to predict an inevitable smash, when he capped their worries by a startling disappearance.

I remembered these things as we shook hands again with much fervor, and called each other hard names, in the foolish fashion of men when they are very glad to see each other. We dined together, and he was persuaded to talk of his five years of wandering. At times it was hard to believe that this was the man I had once known. This was an American of the pioneer breed, from his heels up. The set of his jaw was new, the poise of his head was that of quiet confidence, and in his eyes there was an unquenchable belief in himself and his destiny.

He did not have to tell it for me to perceive that here was one who had "found himself" in the battering stress of circumstances. He had not prospered as the world measures prosperity, but he had won that which was worth many times the fortune he had squandered as a wastrel in his earlier years. When he began to talk of the life that had made a man of him, it was in the measured, almost subdued, tone which you hear among men who have lived long on the trail of the western frontier, on range and ranch and prairie:

"You needn't say anything in New York about running across me out here. I'm not ready to break cover yet. Some day I am going back, but not until

---

## *The Greater America*

---

I have found the place that is waiting for me somewhere, and have made my stake. It's there, I know, and I am moving along until I catch up with it. I'll let you blow me off to this dinner for old times' sake, for it may be the last decent meal I'll have for a while. I have a few dollars in my clothes, but I may need them for railroad fare and grub money until I connect with another job. I've just quit my berth here, aboard a fishing schooner, after punching the head of the mate. Now I am steering for the lumber country up in the mountains.

"We used to talk about the world's being so small that one could not travel far without meeting a familiar face. I have been on the move for five years, from the Rio Grande to the Canada border, and you are the first man I've seen that I used to know. What became of me when I fell off the edge of New York and left you all guessing? I didn't tell the crowd that I had come to the end of my rope, and that I was broke, and that the giddy round was all over for me. I looked around New York in a lucid interval after I made this painful discovery, and found that there was nothing for me in the town except to beg one of my friends for a job as a clerk in his office. There was nothing that I was good for as a bread-winner. It was too much like asking charity to try to persuade anybody to pay me a salary. I couldn't stand for the notion of it.

"So I simply headed away from it all without a

---

## *The Man Who Found Himself*

---

plan in my head, and about two hundred dollars in my pocket after paying off my valet and squaring up my club bills. I simply steered west, where there was more room for action, and where I could keep clear of my friends. In the first week I lost what cash I had playing the races, as a get-rich-quick proposition. Then I was down and out. It's an interesting situation, but rather disquieting until you get hardened to it, this being without work or coin. It was a case of rustle for grub and a bed, and I began right there to find out what the real world was made of.

"It was in the summer, and I decided to try to beat my way on the railroad and get as far as the grain country, where the farmers were offering all kinds of fancy wages for harvest hands. The profession of the hobo requires training to be successfully practiced, and I bungled it at the start. Three strong brakemen tossed me off a freight train at the edge of an Ohio town, and I wandered into the public square and sat on a bench to rest. I was dead for sleep, and sore and hungry, for I had been without food for twenty-four hours. On a bill board across the way were some circus posters, and presently a man strolled by whom I recognized as one of the partners of the show. We had crossed the Atlantic on the same steamer two years before, and sat across the table in the smoking-room during a two days' poker session.



---

## *The Greater America*

---

“ ‘Hello, Jerry Walsh,’ said I. ‘I’m looking for a job.’ He sized me up and was tactful enough to ask no questions.

“ ‘Up against it?’ said he. ‘What can you do in a circus?’

“ ‘I drove my own four-in-hand well enough to win a few blue ribbons,’ I replied, ‘and I guess I could handle a chariot as well as the next man.’

“ ‘Come over to the tent,’ said Jerry Walsh, with a grin. ‘We’re shy a chariot driver just now. It’s a funny old world, ain’t it?’

“ Calling out the boss of the stables, he told him, without wasting words:

“ ‘Here is a New York swell that wants a job. He can drive horses to beat Jehu, though he ain’t good for much else. Hitch up the sorrels and give him a try-out. We’ll want them in the street parade this morning.’

“ The helpers hooked up twelve sorrels in front of a gilded Roman chariot, and I got aboard. They were not hard to handle, and I drove figures-of-eight and cut corners until the boss was satisfied. Then he rigged me out in a flowing toga, and a gilt crown, and I was a Roman charioteer on the payroll. I drove the sorrels for two weeks, in the ring and in the street parades, and it was pretty fair sport. But I couldn’t see any future for me in the circus life, and we parted company as soon as I had a few dollars ahead.

“ It was sweeter and cleaner to join the army of



---

## *The Man Who Found Himself*

---

harvest hands, and so I followed the wheat harvest from Kansas up to Manitoba and back again. It nearly broke my back, for I was soft and flabby, but little by little I got as hard as nails and able to take care of myself. In this first year I saw that my old life had been fast making a wreck of me. I was learning to stand on my own two feet, and to sleep without the fear of going broke or losing my job. The world could not starve me and I was as able to rustle a living out of it as the next man. So I kept moving on, now as a trolley conductor, now as a freight brakeman, again as farm hand, and trying a dozen other things.

“At last I drifted into the cattle country, and was a cow-puncher for two years in Wyoming and Manitoba. They called me ‘New York Red’ on the ranges, and I managed to make good after I’d learned to keep my mouth shut and to try to hold up my end of any job I had to tackle. You run into queer odds and ends of life when you get close down to it on the range. Sometimes it’s like seeing the curtain fall on a play before it is finished, and you are left to wonder what happened afterwards. I ran across one man in the cow country who had come out of my own world back East. He was a Harvard man, and the punchers called him ‘Four-eyed Texas’ because he wore glasses whenever he got a chance to read. I never knew his real name, and none of us ever asked him what it was. Somewhere in his past there was

---

## *The Greater America*

---

a streak of bad medicine. He was a man afraid of himself, and worse scared of somebody else that must have been looking for him. We were sure that somebody was camping on his trail, and we asked no questions. We could not help seeing that he never sat by the fire at night, where he might make a target, but always spread his blankets away off in the shadows. He had two guns ready all the time, and he jumped when he was suddenly spoken to.

“While riding on the round-up one day, I met a stranger about ninety miles from our home ranch where ‘Four-eyed Texas’ was working. The stranger, who looked very glum and hostile, began to ask me about the different punchers in our outfit. He had more curiosity than was normal, and at last he pulled a photograph from his pocket and asked me if I had ever happened to see a man that looked like the picture. It was our Harvard man beyond a chance of mistake. I swallowed hard and lied to the best of my ability. What I told him was that I had seen a young man exactly like that photograph and description, about three months before, heading into the Judith Basin. This was as far away from our ranch as I could figure out in a hurry. The stranger thanked me and started toward the Judith Basin, riding hard, as if he had something important on his mind.

“As soon as I could get back to the ranch I told ‘Four-eyed Texas’ of the interview. He thanked

---

## *The Man Who Found Himself*

---

me and made no comments, but that night he vanished with the best pony in his string, and we never saw or heard of him again. Now what had this Harvard fugitive ever done to set this other man on his trail like a human bloodhound? There was sure to be some killing when they met. You could see it in his manner as long as he stayed with us. But he rode away in the dark and carried his story with him, and it was just a fragment of life in the big West.

“For almost a year I was with an army pack train at Fort Assiniboine, and in the Yellowstone. There was a life in which you could depend upon the government mule to drive monotony far, far away. I recall one Sunday afternoon when we were in camp after a hard march. The pack mules were grazing, and I was reading a tattered novel, and a holy quiet brooded over the landscape. A freight outfit trailed past and a tarpaulin blew off one of the wagons and danced across the country. This stampeded the bell mule, which was roped to a tree. The skittish creature tore the tree up by the roots and started across country, and the pack train proceeded to scatter itself over twenty-five square miles of landscape. After we had collected them, another stampede happened at night, and the mules swept clear over the camp, knocking tents flat and demoralizing the outfit as if a cyclone had struck it.

“While I was quartered at Fort Assiniboine there

---

## *The Greater America*

---

came a call from the reservation for troops. The colonel sent for the chief packer, with orders to have the mule train made ready for service. The chief packer had gone to town. The colonel sent for the second packer. He had also gone to town. The colonel swore, and asked if there was anybody left of the party attached to the condemned pack train. The orderly reported:

“ ‘They have all gone to town, sir.’ ”

“ ‘Who the devil is left of the outfit?’ ”

“ ‘Only the cook, sir.’ ”

“ ‘Fetch him here.’ ”

“The cook was a cockney Britisher, who reported, with fear and trembling:

“ ‘Please, sir, they ’ave all gone to town to get drunk, sir.’ ”

“ ‘Why in blazes didn’t you go with them?’ ” thundered the colonel, with a fine touch of sarcasm.

“ ‘Please, sir, I didn’t ’ave the price to get drunk, sir, and they wouldn’t lend it to me, sir.’ ”

“No, I didn’t go to town to get drunk, old man,” continued the wanderer. “It’s queer, perhaps, but I have cut out the booze, and I have kept myself clean and fit through it all, because I want to be ready when my big chance comes, whatever it is. And there’s something in a husky, out-door life like mine that makes some men want to keep fit and decent all the time. And there’s been lots of pleasure with the hard knocks. Why, for a while I drove a stage out



*The home of the sheep herder*



---

## *The Man Who Found Himself*

---

of Great Falls, Montana. We horsed it with unbroken bronchos and put them into harness by main strength. I drove the coach over part of the run between London and Brighton one summer, just for fun, and I thought it was pretty fair sport. But it was slow and tame beside the whirlwind rush of that start out of Great Falls. In the traces was a bunch of cyclones with hair on them. Once started there was no holding them until they had run themselves tired. For the first ten miles out of town my stage ran as a through express, making no stops, because we couldn't stop. It was a matter of keeping the bronchos headed straight and pouring the leather into them. Over this route we covered a hundred and twenty-eight miles in eighteen hours, which was going some for that kind of country with no roads worth the name.

"From stage driving I shifted to freighting wool into Great Falls, with an outfit of twelve horses and a string of trail wagons carrying three thousand dollars' worth of wool every trip. Then I was led astray by the possibilities of piling up swift wealth in raising sheep. I thought my chance had come after I broke a faro bank in Gilt Edge and walked out with three thousand dollars in cash. I put it all in sheep, and lost it all in three days, when a May blizzard buried my sheep so deep that I never found them to dig them out.

"While I was in Montana, as cow-puncher and sheep-man, I used to get little glimpses of civilization

---

## *The Greater America*

---

now and then. On my days off I would get into a clean pair of overalls and ride into Great Falls and browse all day in the public library, reading the new books and magazines, and having a royal literary spree. At length I moved on to the Pacific Coast, and worked in the sawmills along Puget Sound until I knew the business from top to bottom. As foreman of a gang I broke all records in loading lumber aboard vessels, and I was pretty proud of it. It was my pet theory that because I had some brains and education I ought to be able to load lumber or boss a bunch of men in better shape than the average laborer. Therefore, wherever I was working, if I was not made a 'straw boss' or given a bunch of men to handle inside a month, I threw up the job and moved on.

"Stevedore or cow-puncher, harvest hand or brakeman, sailor or lumber-jack, I have never regretted breaking away from the soft, fat, useless life I used to lead in New York. It's all right for you to think that in five years I ought to have 'made good' and settled down in some kind of a berth with a solid future attached. But I have earned every dollar I've spent, and I have been learning a few things, and I have won what your city man on a salary never does get, freedom from the shackles of fear, fear of losing his job, fear that he cannot meet his bills, fear that he will starve if he is forced out of the narrow rut in which he has made his livelihood. I have



---

## *The Man Who Found Himself*

---

made two or three good-sized stakes, one in Alaska, and lost them in playing for bigger stakes. But I am not much past thirty, and the world is big and busy, and it needs me somewhere. So I shall move on, until I find my niche, and then I shall win out and win out big. When that day comes you may see me back on Broadway, but not until then. I may look like a failure to you, but I am a heap sight more of a man than when I was chartering special cars and driving my own coach."

The wanderer smote the table with a hard and calloused palm, and his brown face glowed with a manly earnestness which was good to see.

"You don't know what it is to pull your belt tighter for lack of grub, and to keep your nerve though you haven't a cent, and always to feel sure that there's a job waiting ahead if you keep on moving. It's a good gamble, if you look at it right, and it's a blessed thing never to be bored and tied down."

With all his brave attitude, there was a wistful look in his eyes when he asked me about men and women and places that had been dear to him in the East. But he had learned to "take his medicine," and to pay the price without flinching. And, more than this, he had found something worth while. It was true, as he said, that fear had been banished from his world of action. He had cast from him the cramping artificialities of the life in which he had been reared and spoiled, and he had become changed

---

## *The Greater America*

---

into a man who was fit to do and to dare all things, and to face any odds by virtue of his strength and courage and endurance. He had nothing to lose and everything to win as he pressed on along the unknown trail, under the big sky, with the fresh winds in his face. He had suffered much, in mind and body, but with it all he had kept unspoiled his faith in human nature, his faith in himself, and, what was as important, his sense of humor.

Even though success had eluded him, it seemed to me that "he had made good." He was braced to fight and to strive, and wealth would not have spoiled this stirring game which he was playing with so high a heart. Nor could I help sharing his buoyant confidence that some day he would return to Broadway and Fifth Avenue, a wanderer and exile come back to his own, after winning the fortune that was waiting somewhere along his trail.

We parted in the late evening, and he turned his face toward the big timber country, reliant, hopeful, and unafraid. It occurred to me that these fragments of his story might be worth while recording, because, in the course of a year, many a young man is heard to say that he wants to try "roughing it in the West" for a time, in order to gain health, or experience, or what not. Here was a young man unfitted by his earlier training to do any kind of work, and yet he has lived and toiled as a man among men for some five years without being overtaken by starvation, and

---

## *The Man Who Found Himself*

---

perhaps his story carries a moral, even though he has chosen to follow, instead of the prudent maxims of Poor Richard's Almanac, the reprehensible desire of him who sung :

“ Therefore from job to job I've moved along,  
Pay couldn't hold me when my time was done,  
For something in my 'ead upset me all,  
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 'twas for good,  
An' out at sea, beheld the dock-light die,  
And met my mate,—the wind that tramps the world.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### A BREATH FROM ALASKA

ONLY ten years have passed since the steamer *Portland* came into Seattle with the first big shipment of gold from the Yukon and Nome in her treasure room. Since then more than a hundred million dollars in raw gold have poured into the assay office at Seattle. It has created a traffic of twenty million dollars a year with Alaskan ports, the greater part of which streams northward from Seattle.

If you think that steam has wholly banished hot-blooded romance from the sea, it is worth loafing along the Seattle wharves in the early autumn when the last steamers of the year are loading for Nome. It is a race with the ice that is already grinding off the distant and lonely coast they are hurrying to reach. Cargo fills their holds in roaring torrents of activity. When the last pound of freight that can be carried is shoved aboard the steamers, perhaps three or four of them turn northward with all the steam their straining boilers can stand up under. It is a gamble, with the chances of being nipped in the ice or being forced to turn back baffled. In the autumn of 1905 the gamblers lost, and one steamer which I saw go surging out of Seattle came limping back a month later, her cargo still under her hatches.

---

## *A Breath from Alaska*

---

An average of nine vessels a week, or almost five hundred a year, clear from American ports for Alaska, figures worth putting alongside the objections of certain sapient Congressmen that it was a ridiculous waste of money to pay Russia \$7,200,000 for "an empty ice-box." The docks of Seattle tell another story.

In this Puget Sound port one stands almost in the middle of the United States of this generation, for the Aleutian Islands stretch two thousand nine hundred miles west of Seattle, while Eastport, Maine, is about the same distance to the eastward. And some of us have to go west to learn that the sun is always shining somewhere in this new America, for when the June twilight falls on the gray waters of Behring Sea, the New England farmer is milking his cows in the early dawn.

To Seattle come down from the mysterious North the weather-beaten prospectors and motley adventurers who have won or lost in the struggle for gold. They lend to this bustling city of trolleys and skyscrapers a touch of the old frontier, and they seem to link the new world with the most primitive and picturesque order of things. You may be sitting at a table in a café as ostentatiously well-appointed as one of your Broadway haunts, and at your elbow is a sturdy pilgrim just landed from the frozen North, who is telling such a story as this, which floated across the table to me:

---

## *The Greater America*

---

"Wilkins was as brave and hardy a man as ever shouldered a pack and hunted for gold along the Copper River," began the narrator, J. S. Gordon. "He was the kind that would travel all day and never get peevish or done up, and he had a cheerful laugh and a good word for all hands, no matter how fast the trouble was coming. He was just one of that breed, big of mind and body, that seems built to rough it and take chances out-of-doors, and who would curl up and pine away cooped up in a city. No game was too stiff for him to go up against, until—but I am getting ahead of the day which fairly shriveled the soul of Charlie Wilkins and left him crushed and quiet and nervous until you pitied him and swore because you couldn't help him get back the courage and the bright temper that had been wrenched out of him for good and all.

"It was in the month of February, and if you've been in Alaska you know what it means to be hauling your outfits up the Copper River on the ice. It wasn't exciting, just a hellish drudgery of fighting the cold and toiling along in the snow and faking up new dreams of gold somewhere ahead to keep you pegging along to God knows where. It was monotonous, hard, and without any end to it, and Charlie Wilkins was the only man who didn't wear the edge off his temper while he was hauling more pounds on his sled than any of the rest of us.

"What happened to him came without any

---

## *A Breath from Alaska*

---

warning. We were shuffling along the river bed, when Charlie looked ahead and saw an open hole in the ice. He was thirsty, and he hustled on a little ahead and was glad to note that the ice was thin and the black water running close to the surface. This made it look easy for him to kneel down, unsling his tin cup from his belt and scoop up a drink. We were moving up to join him when, *plop!* the ice gave way and Wilkins vanished like a shot. There was no time for him to yell or wave an arm. He just dropped into the black water that swirled under the ice and was carried out of sight before we could more than gasp and blink.

"There wasn't one chance in a million that we could ever find poor Wilkins again, alive or dead. While we stood like dumb fools and glared at the hole he had dropped into, the swift current was rolling him under the ice like a log. But with a kind of frenzy we four scattered and ran down stream, stumbling in the snow, falling, scrambling, crying and swearing and calling to each other.

"Every little way one of us, and then another, would fall to scraping a hole in the snow until he got down to the ice, to try to see through it and holler for Wilkins like a crazy man. Then we'd put an ear close to the ice and listen, hoping to hear a yell from Wilkins. It wasn't reasonable, but we couldn't give him up without making a try, and if anybody in the world could best out a hideous game like

---

## *The Greater America*

---

this, it was this same Charlie Wilkins; we all knew that.

“ Ray Millard was plowing along about five hundred yards below the airhole where Wilkins had disappeared, when he thought he heard a faint cry from somewhere under his feet. He pricked up his ears and his hair stood on end, while he yelled for us to come and listen. We crowded around him with our mouths open, and there was a silence you could have cut with an ax while we waited for what seemed years and years. Then we all heard it repeated, a muffled cry for help, just a little, weak ghost of a cry, that seemed ever so far away. There was no doubt about it. We heard it again, and we knew that Wilkins was alive somewhere there underneath the ice.

“ We scattered a little, trying to locate it more definitely, and then we found ourselves circling back like a pack of hounds to where Millard was already flat on his belly, digging away at the ice with his sheath-knife. We had lost our ax coming up the river, and we were expecting to get another that night at camp we were heading for. So all we had to dig with was our heavy knives, and they were like toothpicks for the task in front of us. We flopped down in a bunch and began to chip away at that infernal ice, not knowing how many feet down we had to carve our way. Nobody said a word, just grunted and panted and dug and made the ice fly,



---

## *A Breath from Alaska*

---

and wondered whether we would ever see Charlie Wilkins again. It was almost worse in some ways than to have seen him drowned good and dead before your eyes. If he was still alive and could hear us trying to get at him, and he didn't hold out until we got a hole through—good God, man, think of what torture it meant for him and for us!

“Before long our hands began to bleed from the edges of the ice we were tearing at, and as the hole grew bigger a big crimson splotch appeared in the ice. But nobody stopped to tie up his hands or try to keep gloves on them. Now, you could not have made me believe that a bunch of men could cut down through two feet of ice with nothing but their knives, and do it in time to pull out a man beneath. But we were doing impossible things that day.

“When we were a foot and a half down we were somewhere near the end of this incredible undertaking. We knew this because we could see the water running, and soon could hear the voice of Wilkins.

“We stopped work for a minute, with our heads in the hole, and we could make out some of his words. He was asking us to listen, and then we heard him telling us that he couldn't hold out any longer, and he was bidding us each good-by by name.

“The tears froze on our cheeks as we shouted back to him to hold on and we would soon have him out of there. But there was no response, and we

---

## *The Greater America*

---

were sure that he had drifted away to his death just as we were almost within reach. We fell to again, however, and it seemed as if we could never get through that last few inches. Then some man who had kept his wits from getting clean jumbled shouted back that we must scoop out the ice and make a bigger hole before we broke through, because the water would rush in as soon as the ice was broken, and we couldn't fish Wilkins out if he was still in sight. So we hacked away until we had a hole big enough to let a man's body through and then our knives drove at the bottom all together and we broke through and almost slipped in ourselves, because we were hanging over the edge on our bellies.

"The sled rope had been fetched and we made a loop and passed it down and around the body of what looked like a dead man doubled under there, with only his nose and mouth out of water. He was all in, and there seemed to be mighty little hope of doing anything more with him than digging another hole to bury him ashore. We put him on a sled, stripped and rubbed him, wrapped him up in furs, and filled him full of alcohol and Jamaica ginger and hot water as soon as we could make a fire.

"The drink we threw into him would have made a corpse sit up and kick, and after a repetition of the dose, Wilkins actually opened his eyes. They were sunk 'way back in his head and he looked as if he had lost fifty pounds and aged as many years, his face

---

## *A Breath from Alaska*

---

was so wrinkled and white and drawn. Then we pushed along toward the camp we were hoping to make by nightfall and on the way Wilkins groaned and finally managed to sputter :

“ ‘ Boys, that was a close call.’

“ Next day he was up and weakly puttering around the camp, and trying to lend a hand at the cooking. But he had no strength in him, and he would just sit around most of the time and shiver for sheer nervousness. As soon as he pulled himself together enough to tell us his end of the struggle under the ice, this is what we heard :

“ ‘ When the ice broke under me and I was spilled into the river, I touched bottom with my feet and dragged them along over the rocks trying to brace myself while the current pulled me along. There was room for me to keep my head above water, but in no time I had been dragged down past the hole I had made and was under the ice. But I could see the light that filtered through the hole behind me and I tried to get back to it.

“ ‘ I think I could have made it even against the current, but for the weight of the big cake of ice that had broken off with me and which was butting against my chest and forcing me down stream. It pushed me back step by step, the light getting fainter all the time. I felt my last chance for life was in fighting my way back to the hole, and as the light died out and I went stumbling and kicking down

---

## *The Greater America*

---

stream an inch at a time, I thought it was all over with Charlie Wilkins.

“ ‘This seemed like dying slow and hard but the worst was yet to come. The cake of ice that was shoving me down stream was as cruel and infernally active as if it had been alive. Whenever I’d get a foothold on the bottom and begin to think I could make a step toward the light, the cake of ice would hand me one in the chest or beat my head down under water and I’d have to give up and fight for breath and a chance to get my head above water again. Finally I had to let go. I was getting so weak that I couldn’t brace myself for another effort, and the cake of ice swung me clean around, I lost my footing, and was whirled down stream like a chip, rolling over and over.

“ ‘Somehow I managed to keep the water from getting into my lungs, for I held my breath until I was on the point of blowing up, and then my head would bob out of water and bump against the roof of the river and be forced under again. Now and then my feet would get a hold for a minute and I would try to brace back and turn, but it was no use. Once I fetched up against a boulder but it was too slippery to cling to and I was too weak to get much of a wrap around it. What was I thinking about? Nothing except that I had a mighty few seconds left to live and that it was up to me to make a last kick or two and die with some self-respect because I’d done my

---

## *A Breath from Alaska*

---

best right up to the finish. Also it struck me as a poor kind of a joke to play on a man—this fooling with him like a cat with a mouse.

“Just about that time my feet struck bottom again and I clawed at the ice overhead and one hand caught in a little fissure or crack. I held fast for a moment, got the other hand up and squeezed an arm into the crack pretty near up to my elbow. I dug my heels into the gravel, and hung there, while the water sucked at me and was pulling me down. But by holding my mouth close to the ice I could breathe and I got a little bit of strength back, and my arm half fast in the crack and I was anchored, but God only knew for how long, and it seemed to be no better than dragging the agony out anyhow. But I hung on, you bet, though it did seem most foolish.

“I yelled as loud as I could as soon as my wind came back, though it seemed as silly a stunt as shouting from the Copper River to draw the attention of a friend on Broadway. Then my arm would slip and my heart would freeze up with thinking the end had come, and I'd claw for a fresh hold, and my chin would dip under water and strangle, and the fight for breath would begin again. I was yelling for help whenever I could, but I didn't expect any help, that's the curious part of it. I knew that the ice must be two or three feet thick, and I remembered that the gang had no axe handy, and I had no notion that my voice would carry through the ice.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

“ ‘ I don’t know how long I hung there and went through all this useless circus, but after a long, long while I heard a faint tap, tap. I thought it must be inside my head, but I yelled some more. And after another century or so, it seemed as if a pale patch of light was coming through the ice into the black darkness above me. The tappings sounded nearer, and I guessed that the boys had located me and were trying to get at me by digging at the ice with their knives.

“ ‘ I was numb and dead all over by this time, and had lost all feeling of cold or pain, although my neck was straining nearly double, like a busted hinge, to keep my mouth clear of the water. I was near the end of my rope. I knew I could hold out only seconds longer, and I tried to yell again. This time I got an answer. I could hear voices over my head and I understood they were telling me to keep up courage and hold on and they would get me out.

“ ‘ The news came too late to brace me up. I felt calm and clear-headed and faced death without any more thought of fighting it. I was sure the boys could not reach me in time, for my arm was slipping again and my legs were too far gone to hold me up against the current. I tried to figure out how much longer it would take to get through the remainder of the ice, but it seemed hopeless.

“ ‘ So I said good-by to each of the boys, though I couldn’t see them—but they could hear me. I told

---

## *A Breath from Alaska*

---

them that in my clothes bag I had a little sack of gold-dust which they were to send back to my wife in the States, and I sent a message to her. Then I went off to sleep, and had a few mixed-up thoughts of home and one thing or another, such as you float away into dreamland with, and I thought I heard the tapping and digging again, but it was all very faint and far away.'

"That was the end of Charlie Wilkins," concluded Gordon, "until he came to with a jolt of raw alcohol surging through his system like a prairie fire."

## CHAPTER XV

### ALONG PACIFIC WATER-FRONTS

THE steam-schooner, a vessel whose build and habits are peculiar to the Pacific, often goes to sea "with her load-line over her hatch." Which means, that after her hold has been crammed with cargo, a deck-load of lumber is piled half way up the masts, so that her skipper puts out with the water washing green over his main deck, and an occasional comber frisking across his battened hatches.

Along the harbor front of Seattle runs the story of a passenger who loped down to the wharf in a hurry to get aboard a departing steam-schooner. He balanced himself on the stringpiece for an instant, looked down at what little he could see of the laden craft, and hove his grip-sack down the only opening in sight. He was about to dive after it when a lounge on the wharf shouted:

"Hi, there! Where do you think you're jumpin' to? That's the smoke-stack you tossed your baggage down."

"What!" gasped the passenger, "I thought it was the hatch."

The yarn has a slight flavor of exaggeration, but it may serve to hint that the commerce of the Pacific has ways of its own. Until recently another



---

## *Along Pacific Water-Fronts*

---

distinctive feature of this shipping was that there seemed so very little of it for so vastly much water. Six years ago I crossed the Pacific, bound out of San Francisco for China. The Stars and Stripes had been in the Philippines for two years, and much big talk was stirring about "American expansion" toward the Orient. But even then such dreams had no more than begun to materialize.

That expanse of ocean seemed as empty of shipping as when Sir Francis Drake crossed it in chase of the galleons of Spain, three centuries ago. We steamed three weeks without sighting sail or smoke. Our vessel was the *Rio Janeiro*, an ancient iron kettle which would have been rated as hardly fast enough or stanch enough for the coastwise passenger trade between New York and Florida. A few months later she struck a rock in San Francisco harbor, crumpled up like an old hat, and carried nearly two hundred souls to the bottom in twenty minutes.

At that time, however, she was considered good enough to be called a "Pacific liner," along with such other nautical relics as the old *City of Peking* and the *Peru*. The Pacific Mail had one first-class ship in commission, the *China*. An allied company operated three White Star boats, which in course of time had been found too small and slow for the Atlantic passenger service. It had been left to the Japanese to fly their flag over three fine new steamers of medium size and yacht-like smartness that plied out of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

San Francisco, and from Seattle the same hustling Orientals had put on a regular service in connection with the Great Northern Railway.

Recently revisiting the western coast, I found the signs of a swift and inspiring growth, which may be glimpsed in these bristling figures:

In 1897 the total tonnage of American steam vessels engaged in the Pacific Ocean was 23,426; in 1905 it had increased to 149,685, by which time more vessels in foreign trade were owned in Washington than in any other State of the Union.

From Seattle now sail the magnificent steamers *Minnesota* and *Dakota*, built for James J. Hill, which would loom as giants on the swarming Atlantic and from San Francisco steams the new fleet of majestic liners of the *Korea* and *Manchuria* class, created by the Pacific Mail. Out of Tacoma voyage westward the new ships of the Boston Steamship Company; the China Mutual Navigation Company has invaded the field with a monthly line from Puget Sound to Liverpool and Glasgow, via Oriental ports, and the Germans are building up a new service out of Portland. Besides these regular lines, unattached freighters under steam and sail are hurrying to and from these ports in greater fleets each year. Far to the southward the breakwater at San Pedro stretches out a mighty arm to shelter the coming squadrons of commerce. New ships are building to meet new demands, and yet with almost every voyage the liners

---

## *Along Pacific Water-Fronts*

---

leave behind them waiting cargoes for which they have no space, whose bulk is measured by hundreds of carloads. In the first half of a recent year ten ships were filled with freight left behind by steamers out of Seattle and Tacoma.

Compared with what it is to be, however, this traffic, like the new empire of the coast it serves, is a lusty infant able to sit up and kick. The Pacific is even now an ocean the richness of whose argosies will be revealed to future generations and other centuries. This was one of the impressions gleaned from the tossing deck of a San Francisco pilot schooner cruising to seaward of the oldest and most populous port of the long Pacific coast. I recalled the stately columns of ocean craft that daily move past Sandy Hook, homeward bound and outward bound, their signal bunting fluttering the names of ports in all the Seven Seas, and how on "steamer" days the liners file out through the Narrows, crowding at each other's agile heels, or flock in from the Atlantic, by day and night, like express trains on a crowded schedule.

The pilot schooner *Gracie S.*, off the Golden Gate, was not compelled to dodge any such traffic as this. She might reach out to the Farallones and back to the lightship, or reel hove to on the deep-bosomed Pacific swell for two or three days on end without once trimming sail to meet an incoming vessel from "blue water."

This pilot service differs from that of Atlantic

---

## *The Greater America*

---

ports in that no apprentices are trained to take the places of their elders. The men that cruise off the Golden Gate are chosen from among the veteran shipmasters who have commanded big vessels, under steam and sail, in many waters of the world. Therefore they know not only the harbors of their own coast, but also the ways of ships and the sea at large. To cruise with a crew of these pilots was to gain a more vivid acquaintance with the shipping of the Pacific than could be picked up in browsing along water-fronts and juggling with tonnage statistics.

For it is one thing to read in the *Shipping Gazette* that "the American ship *Wanderer*, a hundred and thirty days from New York, was reported yesterday," and quite another to have seen her backing her main yard for a pilot outside the Golden Gate. First, her royals lifted from the empty sea like a gleaming fleck of cloud. Then one by one her foreyards climbed into view until, when the snowy fabric towered clear of the horizon, she was a picture of surpassing beauty that stirred the imagination to recall a vanishing story of one kind of commerce on the Pacific whose climax was reached nearly half a century ago.

The sails of the *Wanderer* were patched in many places, but the lines of her wooden hull were of more graceful mold than can be found in the cargo carriers of to-day. One of the last of the American sailing ships, the *Wanderer* belonged with the past, just as the great Pacific liner and the wallowing, wall-sided



*One of the last of a noble race*



---

## *Along Pacific Water-Fronts*

---

tramp foreshadow the commercial expansion of the future. The time was when Cape Horn clippers and packets swept through the Golden Gate in such noble fleets as have never since sailed under the American flag. At the height of the gold excitement of the fifties the harbor of San Francisco held more shipping than have ever the ports of Liverpool or New York. The present generation is apt to fancy that creating a commerce on the Pacific is a new thing, for it is easy to forget that it was the Pacific trade which for many years pushed the Stars and Stripes to the front of the merchant marine of the world, a prestige lost so long ago that even its memories are fading.

Where one lonely *Wanderer* signals for a pilot, a score of hard-driven Yankee clippers once surged in from over seas. Now, when British and German ships are carrying the wheat and the lumber and the manufactured products of America across every ocean, it sounds like a fairy tale to read of American fleets which have never been excelled for speed, power and beauty; of the clipper *Flying Cloud*, which in a fair, strong breeze could run away from the steam liners of her time, of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, the *Flying Fish*, the *Phantom*, the *Shooting Star*, the *Westward Ho* and the *Bald Eagle*, all peerless in their day.

They belonged with the time when California, Australia and Oregon were first opening to trade. "The merchant who could get the fastest ship had the market for the fruits of the Mediterranean, for

---

## *The Greater America*

---

the rugs of Smyrna, for the silks of India and the teas of China, and supplied the new States of which the Anglo-Saxon race was then laying the foundations. When John Bull came floating into San Francisco or Sydney or Melbourne he used to find Uncle Sam sitting carelessly, with his legs dangling from the dock, smoking his pipe, with his cargo sold and his pockets full of money. The flag of the United States was a flower that adorned every port."

There is no oratorical exaggeration in this briny eulogy. For example, the log of the medium clipper *Florence*, one thousand tons, records that in a voyage from Shanghai to England, in 1859, when seventeen days out, she exchanged signals with the English ship *John Masterman*, which had sailed thirteen days before her.

The shining prestige of those times was due to the Yankee skipper as well as the Yankee hull. They carried sail and held on to their spars when foreign ships were reefed down snug. It was this same *Florence* clipper that "passed two barks under reefed courses and close-reefed topsails standing the same way—we with royals and topgallant studding sails."

List, ye landsmen, also, to an incident in the career of the immortal *Sovereign of the Seas*. Built by the famous Donald McKay, and sailed by his gallant brother Lauchlan, she left New York for San Francisco in August, 1851. Off Valparaiso she was almost wholly dismasted in a storm carrying away



---

## *Along Pacific Water-Fronts*

---

everything on the fore- and mainmasts above the lower mastheads. In two weeks Captain Lauchlan McKay had fitted out his crippled vessel with so marvelous a jury rig that he reached San Francisco in one hundred and two days from New York, which was recorded as "the best passage ever made for the season."

Mostly under foreign flags, the square rigger still plies the Pacific, no longer clipper built, but a bluff-bowed, clumsy, full-waisted tank jammed full of cargo, with small thought of speed. As for the famous Yankee sea-skimmers, a few of them may be found cut down to melancholy hulks and doing duty as barges towing up and down the Pacific coast, or, with spread of spars sadly reduced, tumbling sluggishly with the salmon and grain fleets, like worn-out thoroughbreds impressed as cart horses.

But even the cheaply built and cheaply manned steel sailing ships of the foreigner must struggle to compete with the big-bellied tramp steamer. The solitary *Wanderer* was not alone in her departing glory. She was luckier than many of her sisters. As our pilot schooner tacked past Sausalito, outward bound, there lifted into view a fleet of a dozen rusting sailing ships tucked away in a pocket of the harbor. They had been laid up in costly idleness, some of them for two and three years, waiting for charters. Said Pilot "Jimmy" Hayes:

"I've seen twenty of these deep-water ships lying

---

## *The Greater America*

---

over there at one time, eating their heads off year after year until you'd think their plates would rust through. A while ago I took one of them to sea, a German bark that had been waiting two years to get a charter. The skipper had tarried so long that he had sent out to Germany and fetched his old mother to 'Frisco to keep him company. He told me his hard-luck story: how at last he had got a grain charter out of Portland and had drawn eleven thousand dollars from home, all he had in the world, to refit his vessel for sea. He worked on my sympathies, telling me how near broke he was and how much he had at stake, and persuaded me to let him down easy on his pilotage charges. He was between the devil and the deep sea, that Dutchman, and there are lots more like him, only they don't bring their old mothers along to make us feel sorry for them."

Awakening a different kind of sentiment was the sight of an army transport signaling farewell to the station at the Golden Gate as she straightened out on her course for Manila. While the East has almost forgotten that troops still say farewell to mothers and sweethearts and wives at the transport docks, to sail away to years of exile in the islands of the Orient, the Pacific coast still thrills to these stirring episodes.

"I was commander of the steamer *St. Paul* while she was a transport on the Philippine run," said Captain Hayes, "and I'll swear I feel the prickles up and down my back to this day when I see one of those

---

## *Along Pacific Water-Fronts*

---

vessels leaving harbor with a regiment of soldiers crowding along her rail, and the band playing, and the old flag snapping in the wind. I got my first thrill at Manila. I had a Tennessee regiment of volunteers on board, homeward bound, at the time when there was a lot of fighting in the islands. We steamed out past the *Olympia*, as close as I dared shove my ship. The band on the flagship was playing the 'Star-Spangled Banner,' and every blue-jacket stood at attention with his cap in his hand. The thousand infantrymen on my vessel let out a yell you could have heard in Manila.

"Admiral Dewey was standing on the quarter-deck, and he bowed, of course. But just then the flagship band swung into 'Dixie,' and our band took it up, and they played it together, and, good Lord, if you ever heard men really yell, it was those thousand lads from Tennessee! The Admiral threw his cap as high as he could toss it, and didn't give a hang whether it came down on deck or over side. And that's the way we left the Philippines.

"Why, I got a lump in my throat the other day when I happened to be down on the dock to see a transport start from 'Frisco. A regular regiment was outward bound, and the dock was jammed with folks come down to say good-by. Half the town was there, as if it was something new to see a transport pull out. There were cheers and tears, and just as the vessel swung clear of the dock the band led off,

---

### *The Greater America*

---

and a thousand men in khaki sung all together,  
' Good-by, Little Girl, Good-by.'

" They say sailors are kind of sloppy weather when it comes to sentiment, but it did beat going to hear an opera just to hear those boys sing ' Good-by, Little Girl, Good-by.' "

## CHAPTER XVI

### ON THE PILOT SCHOONER'S DECK

WHILE the *Gracie S.* was cruising off the Golden Gate there was much time for yarning of ships and sailors. When the wind rose and the green rollers put on their bonnets of foam, a reef was tucked in the mainsail of the stanch schooner, her jib hauled to windward, and she lay to with no more attention from her crew. Then in her little cockpit, whose rail was a shelter against the spray that stormed from forward, or down in the roomy cabin, the pilots three smoked and talked and waited (with the large patience that belongs to sailors and fishermen and prospectors) for the summons of the watch on deck to "board off" when a vessel should be sighted.

There were always shifting backgrounds in harmony with the random chat that seldom veered from salty topics. Sleek and dog-like seals poked their heads from the lazy swells alongside, and stared curiously before they ducked under again. The brown and white gulls that nest on the rocky Farallones hovered astern almost within arm's reach, or swam close to the schooner's counter while they waited for the cook to come on deck with a pan of scraps. Pilots and seamen might bob up through the

---

## *The Greater America*

---

companion hatch and go below without a sign of agitation among the astute gulls. But let the white apron of the cook appear on deck, and there was clamorous commotion among these eager and audacious guests. A flourish of his arm made them fairly hysterical with excitement, and when he tossed his garbage overboard a score of gulls were flying and crying around him, ready to catch the morsels the instant they fell into the sea. It is not too venturesome an assertion that these Pacific gulls knew the meal hours aboard the *Gracie S.*, and if breakfast was late they began to protest with creaking cries and impatient, fluttering flights.

Four-masted coasting schooners now and then slipped into the Golden Gate, bound from Puget Sound ports. They were lumber laden, and their deck loads were of a top-heavy height to afflict an Atlantic coasting skipper with nervous prostration. They were in accord with the spirit of Pacific navigation, which is "to load 'em deep and take chances." A big tramp, coal laden, came waddling in from British Columbia. There was no more than a fine sailing breeze, but when this sluggish *Germanicus* swung in to pick her way through the North Channel, the sea was slopping over her well deck fore and aft. She appeared to be on the point of foundering, but she was no more than making good weather of it with a full cargo.

A slim black schooner, heavily sparred, and tearing

---

## *On the Pilot Schooner's Deck*

---

along like a racing yacht, slid out of the Golden Gate and laid a course a little south of west. There were brown-skinned sailors on her deck, and she smacked of the trade winds and the South Seas.

"She's one of the few island traders left," said a pilot. "There's a bit of life that's almost gone from the San Francisco water-front. A dozen years ago you could find the island schooners in here by the dozen, the kind you read about in Stevenson's bully yarn of 'The Wrecker.' But the beach-comber and the Kanaka sailor and the fast schooner chock full of trade for the benighted islander have slipped away from the American, who didn't hustle enough to keep up with the Germans. It's the Dutchmen that have captured the South Sea business, just as they have scuppered us in the deep-water cargo trade and have made the English look sick in the race for the commerce of the Orient."

The schooner bound for the Marshall Islands was no sooner hull down than a French ship four months out from Hamburg hove in sight, heading for the light-ship. Her string of signal flags showed that she wanted to talk to a pilot. The *Gracie S.* was expecting this stately square-rigger, because the ship's agent in San Francisco had sent orders which he wished delivered to the skipper before he could haul in for the Golden Gate. The pilot schooner shook out a reef, and sped off to meet the Frenchman. Her red-capped crew was cheerily tidying ship, for port was in

---

## *The Greater America*

---

sight. At sight of the pilot boat they dropped their tasks, and tailed on to the weather clew of the main-sail. From the deck rose the hurricane voice of the mate:

“Weather main brace,” and then, “Let go the lee main brace.”

The main yard swung slowly aback, the big ship lost headway, and lay waiting for the pilot, who, the skipper expected, was hurrying to take him into port. But alas! the envelope delivered from the agent in the San Francisco office held orders to proceed to Portland to discharge her cargo.

“By Gar, it means anoizzer month at sea,” bawled the sallow skipper, as he stamped his quarter-deck in rage and disappointment. “Anoizzer month of beating up coast, an’ God knows how long waiting off ze bar.”

The pilot sympathized and made haste to escape. Even the ship seemed to sulk. For an hour she lay off the lightship, her main yard aback, before her crew fell to work, and she swung slowly on her way. It was easy to imagine the gloom streaked with the most vivid profanity which filled the weary ship from cabin to forecastle. Within sight of the Golden Gate, to be ordered to sea again after months of solitary wandering half around the world was like being turned back at your own gate, and within sight of the lights in your own home window, after a long, long absence.





1



2



3



4

*The pilot boat at sea*

1. Yarning in the cockpit.    2. Taking in sail.    3. On her station.
4. "Heave ho!" on the anchor.



---

## *On the Pilot Schooner's Deck*

---

The disheartened wayfarer, with her splendid spread of gleaming canvas, was swooping hull down to the northward like a great gull, when a smudge of smoke showed against the tumbling green sea to the westward.

"The *Siberia*," cried a pilot. "I said she would show up at nine o'clock this morning. It's a little after eight, and she'll be abreast of the light-ship in less than an hour."

His guess was right to a dot. The great liner, fit type of a new era in the life of the wide Pacific, was racing for home from the far-away Orient so close to her schedule that her arrival could be timed as accurately as if she were a transcontinental express. Against another quarter of the horizon the square-rigger was dropping hull down, bearing with her an outlived age of romance on the sea. The liner, with her trailing column of smoke, the cargo of a dozen clippers stowed in her cavernous holds, and the strength of ten thousand horses driving her against wind and weather, brought the message of the new age of the Mind in the Machine. Her giant bulk lost headway, she picked up her pilot, who crawled up her tall side like a fly on the wall, and five minutes later the huge steel fabric was crashing through the swell to finish her run into the Golden Gate, a link between the oldest and newest civilizations, that lie five thousand miles apart in distance but only a few days in time.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Captain John Wallace, now a pilot on the *Gracie S.*, had seen as much of the two eras of steam and sail as a man in his prime could be expected to know. He first went to sea at the precocious age of six months, for his mother was the wife of a down-east shipmaster from Thomaston, Maine. When barely out of his teens this thoroughbred Yankee seaman was master of a deep-water vessel, and for eight years commanded one of the few fine big sailing ships that hail from Maine. His shipmate, Captain Jimmy Hayes, had been master of vessels in the Alaska trade when the gold stampedes to that wonderful country were in full flight. He carried the frenzied argonauts north to the crowded beach of Nome, and to Skagway, when many skippers were facing hazards as startling as any of the perils undergone by the gold seekers. For the sorriest fleet of patched and painted coffins that ever masqueraded as sea-going vessels was assembled to reap the fat harvest of the Alaska coast. Anything that would float and turn over an engine was pressed into service, and the story of the North Pacific includes a picturesque and tragic tally of ships that had no plausible excuse for staying afloat. Even now when an ancient liner drops from the list of the Atlantic trade because of sheer decrepitude it is not to be concluded that she has been sent to the marine bone yard. Two to one she will turn up with a new name and a fresh coat of paint in the Alaska trade.

One evening aboard the *Gracie S.* the merits of

---

## *On the Pilot Schooner's Deck*

---

the Chinese and the Japanese as sailors drifted into the discussion.

With a tone of profound regret in his voice, Captain Wallace observed:

“ This boat has never been the same since Bennie left. Who was Bennie? Just a wizened, cock-eyed Chinaman, cook of the *Gracie S.* for seven years. He left us last cruise, just packed up his duffle and went ashore. All Chinamen look alike to you, eh? Well, that’s because you didn’t know Bennie. He was a down-east, New England Chinaman. Old Captain Scribner, a Maine skipper, picked Bennie up when he was six years old and raised him by hand. He grew up as good an American as you ever clapped eyes on. He could pull a rope, stand a trick at the wheel, work fifteen hours a day and cook like a wizard. We couldn’t get along without him, and then he up and quit us because the Scandinavian foremast hands made some remarks about his grub. His cooking was too good for them, that was the matter. Bennie stood it a little while, and then came to me and told me that he liked Yankees, because he was one of us, and would stand anything we had a mind to say about his menu, but he’d be jiggered if he’d stand any observations from those foreigners forward, meaning the ‘ square-heads.’ ”

“ That’s right, Johnny,” broke in Captain Hayes; “ Chinamen are good men afloat, but I haven’t much use for Japs. Why, I took in a Maru boat the other

---

## *The Greater America*

---

day, and the chief engineer, who was an Englishman, was giving me his opinion of Japs as sailors. He had the evidence to back it up, too. We know they're slow and lazy, but did you know that they're man-eaters? This engineer was all bandaged up. He said the back of his hands and the front of his legs were chewed up as if a menagerie had broken adrift in the cargo. There had been a lively scrap in the fire room, and when he sailed in to clear the place, his Jap stokers and trimmers turned on him and chewed him up, according to their own style of fighting. Now wouldn't that make you sick. Men calling themselves sailors with habits like that!"

I asked for tales of personal adventure and was ill-rewarded, for men who live amid strong and hazardous deeds are not easily led to talk about themselves.

"We have some rough times off here in the winter," said Captain Hayes, "when the southeasterly gales blow up. It isn't freezing weather, like Atlantic cruising, but it blows hard enough to break the lightship adrift every winter or so, and she manages to clear Race Point somehow when she blows to the northward. She'll go ashore some time and there'll be a lively story for you. Which reminds me of the time when the reporter asked Gus, the Norwegian foremast hand, for an adventure story.

"'I vas upset sometimes in de yawl, boarding off steamers in bad wedder,' said Gus, willing to oblige. 'Last vinter de yawl turned over und de udder feller

---

## *On the Pilot Schooner's Deck*

---

vas drowneded. I vas in de vater an hour, und I got pooty vet. Dot's all, I tink.'

"Seafaring life on this coast isn't so much what you get into as what you manage to steer clear of," Captain Hayes continued. "The pilots and shipmasters are blamed for a lot of disasters, but there's two sides to the question. San Francisco harbor, for example, is a mean place to handle a vessel. The currents shift over night and the fog shuts down like a blanket. Then we have to smell our way and often steer by the echo of the fog whistles against the rocks, and steering by echoes isn't all plain sailing, if you've ever tried it. Why don't we anchor and wait? *We* do, but it's often against the wishes of the shipmaster, and back of him is the owner, crazy to take chances and make time. Most ships lost along the Pacific coast go ashore because the master is hugging the points and doubling the headlands instead of giving himself plenty of sea room, all to gain a little time and save a few tons of coal.

"And I've taken many a steamer to sea when her compasses were no more use for steering by than a cat's tail in the dark. Her owner had given the skipper no time to swing his ship in port and adjust his compasses, and he went blundering out to sea, shaving the coast, his compass behaving like a drunken sailor. Then when he loses his ship, he's most likely ruined for life, if he's lucky enough to escape being drowned."



---

## *The Greater America*

---

"Right you are, Jimmy," said Captain Wallace. "And folks ashore think the compass always points north and south. If they want to signify the straight, honest goods, they'll say 'true as the needle to the pole.' As a matter of fact, the compass points almost any other old way by preference. Think of all the kinks you have to look out for. For instance, do you know there is less compass deviation aboard a steel ship if she's laid down north and south in the building yard? It's true. Her hull becomes magnetized by the pounding of the riveters on her plates. This wears out of a ship in time. I once boarded a new steel steamer, and her captain said, while he was showing me his compasses:

" 'She's getting better all the time. It will wear out of her in two or three more voyages. If she'd laid down east and west, the deflection would be much worse.' You might have thought he was telling me about a horse he was breaking to harness. Funny, isn't it? "

"Yes," said Captain Jimmy, "it's one more nut for the poor shipmaster to crack. It's bad enough to have to allow for deviation caused by cargo. Even coal has played the devil with lots of compasses and wrecked more than one fine vessel on this coast. There's enough iron in several thousand tons of coal to get on the nerves of the compass, and I once saw a ship get clean off her course because the man at the wheel had a jackknife in his pocket."



---

## *On the Pilot Schooner's Deck*

---

Within the last half century hundreds of stout vessels have piled up on the rocky heads between Puget Sound and San Diego, many of them overloaded and undermanned. Contrasted with this black record is the story of the pilot schooner of the Golden Gate, which is almost the last of her kind. She has already vanished from the offing of New York harbor and the Delaware Capes, where steam has retired these stout-hearted little vessels. Through the storms of two generations, while big ships and steamers were adding their names to the list of Pacific disasters, these schooners have fought through heavy weather and clawed off lee shores.

Only two of them have been lost since the fleets of the Cape Horn clippers brought them into being. Five years ago the *Bonita* was rammed by a whale while at sea, and the sternpost ripped out of her. Her crew had barely time to pitch their yawls over and escape with what they stood in before she went to the bottom. Thirty years ago, the *Caleb Cushing* capsized while crossing the bar in a southeast gale. She turned over end for end and all hands were lost in this fatal somersault. Neither disaster could be blamed to poor seamanship or lack of stanchness in the lost vessels. They are examples of honest ship-building to-day. It was the *Gracie S.* that missed stays in a strong tide, and crashed fourteen feet into a San Francisco wharf without starting a plank of her hull. As for the seas that break over the bar

---

## *The Greater America*

---

when big winds blow and the pilot schooners are scudding for home. Captain Jimmy Hayes can tell you stories like this:

"I was taking out a big English tramp when there was some weather on the bar. Three seas broke clean over her bridge. The captain and the mate took to the rigging and left me by my lonesome. I couldn't persuade 'em to come down from their perches until we were in the channel again. They swore the vessel was foundering. They looked kind of ridiculous spraddled out in the shrouds. Yes, it's a bad bar at times."

When all three pilots had forsaken the *Gracie S.* to board the vessels they were seeking, the little schooner was left in charge of her grizzled boat-keeper, who had sailed in these craft for more than thirty years. We headed homeward with a fair wind and slipped past the rugged portals of the Golden Gate into one of the fairest harbors in all the world. The greatest city of the Far West was purpled in twilight that shadowed its protecting hills. Along the water-front were clustered the spars and stacks of vessels loading for the ports of the Orient, Alaska, the South Seas and Hawaii.

And beyond the wharves and the city stretched the unseen railroads, fighting the most dramatic industrial conflict of to-day for the victors' share of the Pacific commerce that bulks so big in reckoning with the future of American enterprise. Half a century



1



2



3

1. Returning from a visit to the light-ship      2. A Pacific barkentine in tow.  
3. The liner homeward bound from China.



---

## *On the Pilot Schooner's Deck*

---

ago William H. Seward read the signs aright when he said:

“The Pacific Ocean, with its shores, its islands and the vast region beyond will become the chief theater of events in the world's great hereafter.”

Building fleets is only one factor in the present struggle for expansion. Far back of the firing line are the leaders of the opposing forces, James J. Hill and E. H. Harriman. They have spent half a billion dollars in a decade. They have rebuilt the trans-continental railway system, and their competition has reduced freight rates thirty per cent. They have made cities, bridged seas, tunneled mountains, and achieved feats of engineering and executive daring unequalled in industrial development. Mr. Hill has said of his controlling ambition:

“I have been charged with everything, from being an ‘Oriental dreamer’ to a crank, but I am ready at all times to plead guilty to any intelligent effort within my power that will result in getting new markets for what we produce in the northwestern country.”

He has made his dreams come true. Seattle was a straggling seaside town when he put his railroad into it. Since that time the Puget Sound ports have become mighty rivals of San Francisco for ocean traffic, and the older city at the Golden Gate has seen them increase their tonnage by leaps and bounds, and at her expense.

If you would be impressed by a final proof that

---

## *The Greater America*

---

the dreamers of yesterday are the builders of to-day, you should see one of J. J. Hill's new steamers loading for Japan and China and Manila, and then recall the kind of liners that were on the Pacific a few years ago. The *Minnesota* or *Dakota* swallows thirty thousand tons of cargo, which is the burden of five hundred freight cars. They carry three thousand passengers when the lists are full. Their tonnage is twenty-two thousand, or six thousand tons greater than any other vessel in the Pacific trade. And looking a little further backward, one finds that the *Minnesota* is almost twenty times larger than the far-famed clipper of the age of sail, whose titanic heir she is to the commerce of the Pacific.

A century ago a Salem bark of only two hundred tons (a hundred of her like could be stowed in the holds of the *Minnesota* or *Dakota*) made one of the first voyages around the Horn to the new Northwest coast. She mounted eight guns, and her cargo consisted of "broadcloth, flannel, blankets, powder, muskets, watches, tools, beads and looking-glasses," for trading with the painted natives. On a recent voyage the *Minnesota* carried to the Orient seventy locomotives, more than a hundred railway cars, ten thousand kegs of wire nails, and half a million dollars' worth of hardware, machinery, flour and other products of the mills, the mines, the farms and the factories, that, even from the far-away Atlantic coast, seek new outlets toward the setting sun.

## CHAPTER XVII

### TWENTIETH CENTURY ARGONAUTS

FORTY gold dredgers working in the heart of the storied land of the Forty-niner!

There could be no more melodramatic contrast between Past and Present, between the age of Man and the age of the Machine.

Then, the hardy argonauts with hearts of oak, who toiled and sweated and roistered and starved in the Sacramento Valley and the Sierras, packing their gold pans and rockers on their backs; now, the huge machine, devastating, incredibly industrious, that makes play of doing the work of hundreds of men in a day.

The argonauts skimmed the cream of the placer diggings and spent their gold and died. After them came hordes of Chinese, who reaped a second harvest from the same country. Hydraulic mining followed, and had its era, and then placer mining seemed a dying industry in the region Bret Harte peopled for the joy of nations with such heroic figures as Jack Oakhurst and Colonel Starbottle. The gold seekers turned to other fields afar, to the Klondike and South Africa; and the famous old-time placer camps of Stanislaus, Yuba, Calaveras and Oroville slumped into a picturesque and melancholy dilapidation. They belonged with a brave and splendid history.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Around them for miles and miles was strewn the wreckage left by those early placer miners, a country dotted with heaps of stone and gravel, pitted with raw scars, a landscape ravaged and unsightly, yet dignified, in a certain measure, by the memories of the elemental manhood that had dared and labored with strong arms, and left its sons to build up this western empire.

In those days flat-bottomed steamers scraped their way up the Sacramento, far above the city of that name, slid into the Feather River, and managed to go as far as Oroville. This town, in the shadow of the Sierra Nevadas, when left stranded by the decay of placer mining, suffered yet another invasion, before there came a generation of slumber, and then, in these days, a clamorous invasion by the fleet of gold dredgers. In the early sixties, the Chinese swarmed down to pan and rock for gold, until ten thousand of these alien invaders were slaving in the fields and cañons and creek bottoms around the town. The straight American breed was not only outnumbered, it was almost submerged. But at length the plague of pig-tailed miners with the blue blouses passed on when they could no longer wash out enough "color" to satisfy their singularly modest demands, and the average on-looker would naturally have supposed that whatever gold the Chinese left behind was not worth the attention of any white man outside a padded cell.



---

## *Twentieth Century Argonauts*

---

Oroville discovered that the only natural asset not torn to pieces by the hunt for gold was the climate, and began to plant orange and olive groves, and turn itself into as conservative and respectable a community as you could find on the map. The green groves spread among the pits and stone piles, and slowly the country took on a verdant and pleasing aspect, and the quiet industry of the fruit farmer was hiding the wounds left by the gold seeker.

Less than ten years ago, however, an amazing thing happened to Oroville, beside which those earlier invasions were of the kindergarten order. Employing huge power dredging machines to extract gold from ground already worked over had been tried many years before in Montana. It failed there for lack of sufficient mechanical ingenuity. Earlier even than that, half a century ago, inventors were dreaming and working at the problem, and the rusting skeletons of their failures are scattered over California and New Zealand. There is even report of a dredge that failed on the Feather River near Oroville while the argonauts were in their heyday. And it was at Oroville, in 1896, that the first successful operation on a large scale had its beginning.

Now, thirty of these monsters are making hash of the landscape within eight miles of the town, and more are building.

Unless you have seen them at work, the gold dredger does not convey much that is of striking and

---

## *The Greater America*

---

impressive interest. You couple it in your mind with the squalid and grimy harbor and river steam dredgers, which fail to inspire a thrill in the most morbidly imaginative observer. Compared with these, however, the gold ship is as a thoroughbred to a cart horse, or a liner to a coal schooner.

It does things which no machine built by man has any business doing. It is a huge vessel afloat, of the imposing height and bulk of a Mississippi River packet; a regiment of troops could be massed on its decks. Yet it is not built on the river, it is never launched, and you may find one working five miles from the nearest navigable stream, yes, even in the middle of an orange grove whose only pretense to water transportation is an irrigating ditch.

This vessel, so big and towering that its upper works can be seen across miles of open country, is distinctly a nautical paradox to the verge of absurdity. When the capitalist behind one of these enterprises wishes to invest from \$50,000 to \$80,000 to add a new dredge to his fleet (for this is not a poor man's game), the construction force begins the operation by digging an immense hole in the ground, called the "pit," located in the middle of the area which is to be dredged for gold. In this excavation the hull of the vessel is built, resting on the bottom. Then her upper works are added, and her powerful electric machinery and dredging apparatus installed.

So far the process is like that of building a factory,

---

## *Twentieth Century Argonauts*

---

minus the cellar. When the vessel is ready to be "launched," if you may call it such, a ditch is opened from the nearest water supply—a little ditch at that, not much bigger than the kind one jumps across in a country field. The water fills the pond, until the ungainly craft is floating, and she needs only three feet of water for her extraordinary purposes.

A heavy copper cable, buoyed on floats, writhes from the bank to her interior. There is no boiler, no smokestack, no fireman, no engines to speak of. She is a craft of surprises at every turn. She has borrowed the water to float herself. She takes the power to operate her machinery from mountain streams forty miles away in the Sierras. The electric current thus generated is not alone for the dredgers. It is carried two hundred miles farther, and turns the factory wheels of San Francisco, and even down to San José. And because man has solved the problem of transmitting the strength of thousands of horses from waterfalls, over hundreds of miles, man is almost eliminated from these gold dredgers.

Over a great arm of timbers and steel, lowered to the bottom of the little pond, revolves an endless row of steel buckets. The edges of these buckets bite into the clay, the gravel and the sand, and this real estate is fed into a hopper which sends it along for treatment.

As the dredger eats its way into the bank ahead, it hitches its bulk along and thus makes more room

---

## *The Greater America*

---

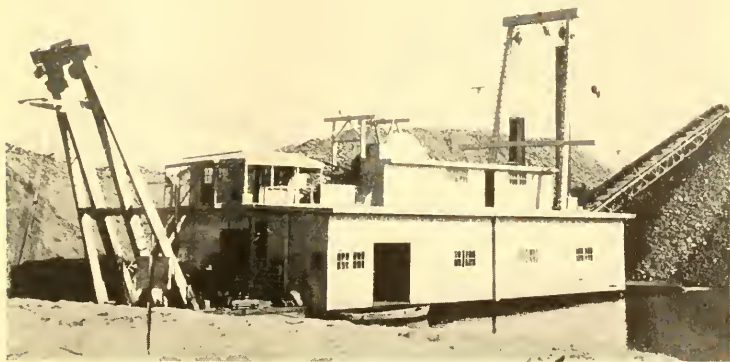
for itself. In time the muddy pit may stretch away into a canal, perhaps a half mile long, in which the dredger advances, chews up the landscape, turns and digs another canal parallel with its first track, as it seeks the earth worth its while to pick up and digest.

The havoc wrought is fairly staggering. The earth is washed from the stones as the débris passes through the vessel, and these stones, in size from a pebble to a boulder, are spewed out from the other end of the machine until they are piled into great windrows and hills thirty and forty feet high—gaunt, bald ranges of stone on which nothing can ever grow. No contrivance of man blasts a landscape more utterly.

Thus devouring earth and spitting out rock, the dredger moves across the face of the land. She picks up two thousand cubic yards of earth every day, and the weight of it is five thousand tons, a cargo for a large ocean steamer. This five thousand tons is taken aboard, the gold extracted, and every bit of the earth and stone put overboard again, by a crew of—fifty men? No, only three men are required to operate this monster, three men and a “boss,” three shifts a day, with helpers, a dozen men all told, to keep the gold ship working twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-four days a year, for Christmas is the only day on which the vessel is idle, except for repairs.



*The shack of the Forty-niner*



*A monster that makes hash of the landscape*



---

## *Twentieth Century Argonauts*

---

Of these three men, one stands in what may be called the pilot house on the hurricane deck, and handles a set of levers and two electric controllers like those of the motorman of a trolley car. In this easy fashion he sends the great dredging arm burrowing deeper, or farther ashore, and moves the vessel to keep pace with the work. Timber anchorages, called "spuds," hold her in position fore and aft, and wire cables lead from shore to geared drums aboard, so that the craft pulls herself into a new position whenever needed.

The second man looks after matters in the machinery between decks, and a third man hovers around as an extra hand, although he is not needed in the actual operation of the ship.

Here you see a rare triumph of labor-saving ingenuity, yet the gold saving is far more remarkable a feat. A cubic yard of earth, gravel and stones weighs nearly one and a half tons. The average value of the gold taken from this mass of earth in the Oroville district is *seventeen* cents. That is to say, to extract one dollar's worth of gold, between eight and nine tons of real estate must be screened and washed.

Now, one cubic yard, or ton and a half, of earth, is a large mass, how large you may gain some notion by recalling what a ton of coal looks like. The seventeen cents' worth of gold in it is not all in one piece. Even if it were, it would bulk about one-sixth



---

## *The Greater America*

---

of the size of one of those wee gold dollars that were withdrawn from circulation because when a man received one he was never quite sure whether he had it with him or not.

This tiny amount of gold is scattered through the earth and stones in particles so fine that a breath will often blow them from the palm of your hand. Their average size is—well, they just miss being smaller than anything—not mustard seed, because they are flat and thin like tiny scales.

Now, when you divide an amount of gold one-sixth the size of a gold dollar into a large number of fractions, and hide these almost infinitesimal bits in a cartload of earth, finding the proverbial needle in a haystack becomes child's play. On a somewhat larger scale, imagine sifting eight tons of coal over a screen until one gold dollar drops through in installments.

When the avalanche of dripping earth and stones thunders through the hopper, it falls upon a series of steel screens frequently perforated with holes about the size of a lead pencil. Many jets of water, under pressure from a pump below, drive into the mass of débris, which is in violent agitation because the screens are shaking to and fro with much rapidity. The stones, smooth and rounded by glacial wear and tear, do a devil's dance, tons of them at once, while the earth and the smallest gravel are washed through the screens.

Inasmuch as only a small part of the material is



---

## *Twentieth Century Argonauts*

---

shaken through, the stone becomes refuse. It roars down across the screens, and tumbles on to an endless belt moving in a trough, and marches up, up a long arm at the stern of the vessel until it tumbles on the heap of waste material which grows into one of the young mountains of stone that are murdering the Oroville landscape.

Once through the screens, the material saved is caught up in a flood of water that surges down over a row of sluices. These sluices or inclines are crossed by many bars of wood and metal, called "riffles," which are loaded with mercury as a bait to catch the coy flakes of gold.

Gravity is the engineer in charge here, As by a miracle, these tiny particles settle in this seething torrent of water, and nestle against the "riffles," there to stay until the monthly "clean-up." This part of it is the old placer-mining process expanded to meet these new conditions.

Freed of its gold, the water races down to flow into the pond through a "tail sluice," and is used over and over again by this highly economical craft.

It is an easy matter to reckon that by handling 2,000 yards of earth a day one of these dredgers will hold on to \$640 worth of gold every twenty-four hours. It is a lesson in the value of little things that would have delighted the author of "Poor Richard's Almanac." The owners of these plants work them to the limit of their capacity in order to extract the

---

## *The Greater America*

---

profits demanded. If a dredger stops working five minutes for repairs, the stop is logged by the foreman, and if there are many of these pauses in the month, the superintendent is apt to ask for explanations. It is a breathless race for gold, seemingly as frenzied in its way as the headlong rush for a Klondike field. Machinery is not built that can stand such high-pressure strain without rest, and many and costly have been the breakdowns in these greedy craft.

My first glimpse of this quest of gold by twentieth century methods was by night, with the general manager of one of the largest companies operating. I drove through a starlit evening to the Garden Ranch dredger, five miles out of Oroville, and five miles from the river. By the roadside were dusky rows of orange trees, the homes of farmer and fruit grower were half hidden in shade trees, and the smell of roses blooming out-of-doors in late October was in the air.

The scenes were sweetly rural, with the semi-tropical charm of this sun-bathed California valley.

After a while there gleamed through orderly rows of orange trees a blaze of electric illumination, as if a bit of Coney Island had been broken off and tossed into this far corner. Drawing nearer, the incongruous dazzle outlined the broad-beamed bulk and extended arms of the dredger, a strange sight in the night for such a background. One hundred and fifty candle-power lights bedecked it, and the crew stood

---

## *Twentieth Century Argonauts*

---

out black against this fierce illumination. Daylight could have been no brighter.

The vessel floated in a pond just big enough to hold her. Ahead was the orange grove she was devouring. Astern of her the débris of stone was heaped higher than her decks. It was impossible to help asking, "How on earth did she get there?" "Oh, she was built and floated several hundred yards back of where she is now," was the explanation. "As she's worked forward, the waste has been thrown off behind her, so she's covered up her tracks. All the water we need is just what you see around her, this little mud-hole of a pond. An irrigation ditch gives us all the water we need."

Clamorous, untiring, eating land by night as well as day, the dredger tugged at her moorings, her deck heaving to the power of her exertions, until, out here in the mysterious night, it were not overfanciful to think of her as incarnate with the spirit of the age that can create such things as these.

As we drove toward, the road lifted to a hill-top, beyond which the quiet country unfolded for a long distance. There were no lights in the houses by the road, and the town was not yet visible, but against the starry horizon gleamed a line of brilliant lights in clusters. They stretched away in a dimming belt for five miles. One was reminded of a procession of big excursion steamers passing up river after dark. These were the lights of the gold ships, a squadron taking

---

## *The Greater America*

---

new wealth from the soil, an up-to-date argosy under the American flag.

Next day I visited several of these craft, scattered over thousands of acres of land, most of which was valuable for fruit growing until the gold fleet came. Now the dredge companies own about 5,500 acres in the Oroville district, and will buy about two thousand acres more that have been prospected.

Calculating that this area will be worked to a depth of ten yards, it is estimated that these 7,500 acres will yield a little more than sixty million dollars in gold. In the Folsom district of Sacramento County, where eight dredgers are now at work, the probable yield for the 5,000 acres controlled will be forty million dollars.

There is another side to this glittering picture. These 7,500 acres around Oroville, in the orange belt, will be ruined for all purposes and for all time. They will be destroyed as effectively as if an earthquake dropped them into the bowels of the earth. The Gould transcontinental line from Salt Lake is pushing its construction through the Oroville district. Competition for freight traffic with the Southern Pacific will lower rates for the fruit growers, and increase the productive value of their land. I have seen regions in this western country, far less favored by nature, in which irrigated land had reached a value of a thousand dollars an acre for fruit growing. It is therefore not impossible that the

---

## *Twentieth Century Argonauts*

---

next generation of dwellers in the Oroville district may bitterly regret that their fathers sold their acres to the gold dredgers.

But the gold seekers, as has been their habit always, think not of the morrow. They will devour until no more remains, and then move on to fresher fields, leaving wreckage in their wake. Hydraulic mining in California was at length killed by process of law, for the very reasons mentioned. But your gold miner, whether he toils at rocker or ground sluice or from his offices in New York and San Francisco urges his eighty-thousand-dollar dredger to strain for greater output, reckons not with the future. His view-point is somewhat akin to that of the lumberman of Washington and Oregon who sweeps through the primeval forest like a whirlwind, and leaves a vast wreckage behind him. Wealth is in the present tense, and "the sooner the quicker," is the motto of such enterprising Americans as these.

The gold dredgers may be right. Perhaps the gold is worth more than the land will ever be. This is for the future to solve. The observation of another stranger in Oroville when first he surveyed the trail of the gold ships is not out of place or open to argument:

"Now ain't they kicking up the unadulterated dickens of a muss!"

When you think that this bold quality of American inventive talent has been able to devise machinery

that makes it profitable to extract ten cents' worth of gold from a ton of earth, the enterprise becomes one of the romances of American industry; even if lives were not risked in the quest, capital gambled against huge hazards, and dashingly played for big stakes. Hundreds of thousands were thrown away in dredgers that failed. Even now, many problems are not out of the experimental woods. In New Zealand, for example, twenty dredgers were built fifteen years ago, at a cost of nearly \$20,000 each, and proved failures. New talent made the attempt and succeeded, until now more than three hundred dredgers are digging for gold in New Zealand.

Near Oroville, on a noble height, overlooking the Feather River, there is a home for ancient and disabled Odd Fellows. The Butte dredger is not far away, and on the road to it you cross a mountain brook that winds amid many placer piles left by the "old-timers." One of these fine old Odd Fellows is a miner of the days of the argonauts, and he is not content to pass his latter days in idleness. So at the edge of the brook he has built him a rude shack of the type he learned to make in these valleys a half century ago. Under this shelter he has planted a gold rocker, and the simple kit of the California pioneer gold seeker. Here you can find him digging gravel from a near-by bank, lugging it up to his rocker by the brook and washing out a little gold for a prodigious amount of labor. With good luck, he

---

## *Twentieth Century Argonauts*

---

may clean up fifty cents a day. He no longer has to earn his bread that way. He does it because he likes to. His shack is a picture such as you must travel far to find in the California of to-day. From his rocker, the old miner can hear the gold dredge grumbling and clanking as it chews up and spits out five thousand tons of "pay dirt" every twenty-four hours. Past and Present are neighbors here.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### WHERE RANCH AND CITY MEET

NOWHERE can old and new American conditions be found, side by side, in more picturesquely impressive contrast than in that sunny corner of the Pacific Coast which is dominated by the spirit of Los Angeles. The city itself is a display of almost cyclonic enterprise, prosperity, and expansion, which have safely weathered the perilous enthusiasms of the "boomer" and the "booster."

A foreign observer seeking the typical American spirit working at high pressure could do no better than to sit and "watch Los Angeles grow." This sounds a trifle like a real estate advertisement, but it is meant only as a passing tribute to a city which has outstripped every other American city through the last decade, in the rate of its increase in building operations, property values, and population.

Our observer would not have to dig out the facts and figures. They would be hurled at him by every other son of this magical city, and with an air of pride which makes your thorough-going western man distinctive. He boils over with loyalty and belief in the ultimate destiny of his particular town from his boot-heels up, and whether it be Spokane or Portland or





*A corner of Santa Anita ranch*



---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

Los Angeles, he feels that his individual fortune is vitally bound up in the future of his community.

Can you imagine a committee of citizens of an eastern town setting in operation a plan whereby all the boys and girls in the public schools pledge themselves that whenever they write a letter to friends or relatives "back East," they will include mention of the charms of climate and the allurements of material prosperity to be found in their community and State? This was one item in a recent "Boosters' Club" campaign in Spokane, and it is mentioned here to illustrate the spirit which is common to these coast cities.

Los Angeles is unique because it has become a city of two hundred thousand souls with a cheerful disregard of the laws of growth which are presumed to have a hand in upbuilding important commercial and distributing centers. Its back country is still undeveloped, its shipping is in its infancy, and its manufactures are as yet a minor factor. These things have made it the prodigy among American cities—climate, trolley lines, advertising. At first glimpse, this does not look like a stable foundation, yet Los Angeles continues to grow and to turn the laugh on the prophets who have wailed that such expansion was top-heavy by the very nature of things.

Now this city of massive hotels and business blocks and beautiful homes, with an interurban electric railway system which makes eastern enterprise seem crude

---

## *The Greater America*

---

and primitive, has risen from a half-Mexican *pueblo* of ten thousand people in less than a generation. Figures are bald and unromantic, but let us deal with a few and have done with them. Los Angeles has more automobiles and telephones per head than any other American city; it led them all in increase of postal receipts last year; its assessed values are nearing the two-hundred-million-dollar mark, and it has begun work on a water-supply system which will cost twenty-one million dollars, and which will convey the mountain streams of the Sierras a distance of more than two hundred miles.

So much by way of showing that the era of frenzied speculation is past, and with it the days of the real estate auction circuses with brass bands and side shows, which ran amuck some twenty years ago. It is true that to-day the real estate market strikes a conservative Easterner as fairly acrobatic. You cannot heave a brick anywhere within twenty miles of the city that will not alight on an attractive speculation in town lots. The electric roads, four hundred miles of them radiating from Los Angeles and five hundred miles more building along this corner of the coast, are bringing the whole countryside within touch of the city, and as a direct result there are such rapid increases in values as make one's head swim until he becomes acclimated. On these roads, which are built and ballasted like steam lines, trains of electric cars whizz and whirr at speeds of thirty and forty

---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

miles an hour, thereby sweeping all the land within fifteen miles of Los Angeles, for example, into the market for suburban property.

This tide of excessively up-to-date American expansion has swept before it the old life and atmosphere of the surviving Spanish and Mexican settlements. The prosaic Saxon first curtailed the beautiful name of his town, Pueblo de la Reina de los Angeles (Town of the Queen of the Angels), and later obliterated the native himself. There is a straggling Mexican quarter of the modern Los Angeles, and in the outskirts you may find the 'dobe house and the mud hovel thatched with straw where dwell the descendants of the race which won this wondrous territory for the red and yellow banner of Castile. These are no more than melancholy and unimportant relics of a vastly romantic and picturesque era which has passed away within the memory of living men.

There still survives an opportunity, however, to find, in its last days, a magnificent survival of the life and background and conditions which immediately preceded the amazing modernity of Los Angeles and of the lamented San Francisco. One of the last of the ancient and lordly estates of Southern California lies at the very edge of Los Angeles, the Santa Anita ranch of "Lucky" Baldwin. Its doom is so imminent that the process of destruction has even begun. The electric road has gashed a path through its groves and orchards, and the real estate speculator is

---

## *The Greater America*

---

nibbling at its outskirts. Within five years it is likely that this ranch will be dotted with the red-roofed cottages of the eastern pilgrim, and checkered with "boulevards" and "avenues."

It is still a feudal community unto itself, this princely realm of sixty thousand acres. But it must go, because these sixty thousand acres are worth *ten million dollars* as city and suburban "real estate," a very pretty rise in values since "Lucky" Baldwin picked up these Spanish grants for a song as farming land some forty years ago. For more than a century these lands have been cultivated in a glorious sweep of vineyards, and orange and olive orchards, rich sheep and cattle pastures, and horse ranches, their life and customs handed down from the Spanish owners of the various ranchos which were swept into one estate by the pioneer "Lucky" Baldwin.

The very names of the tracts which were grouped under the name of Santa Anita ranch sound mellow and reminiscent to the ear: La Puente, Portrero de Felipe Logo, Portrero Grande, La Merced, San Francisco, Da Cienega, and Portrero Chico, all in the heart of the beautiful San Gabriel Valley.

With these ranches came one of the oldest vineyards and wineries of Southern California, founded by the Spanish padres from the San Gabriel Mission. And the low, white-walled adobe home in which the aged "Lucky" Baldwin lives to-day was built as a fort and outpost by these same Spanish friars when



---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

these lands were being wrested from the wilderness. The links which lead from the modern Los Angeles back to the Spanish era are therefore unbroken.

The Santa Anita ranch, through which darts the electric car filled with tourists from the East, was tenanted when the tall galleons were bringing from Spain the priests and soldiers to govern this new land of theirs; when the little pueblo of Los Angeles was gay with *caballeros* who bade farewell to black-eyed girls before they set out for the unknown North; when, at length, the Santa Fé trail crept overland to reach the Pacific shore and brought the vanguard of the hardy American invasion which was to sweep over the Spanish-speaking race like a landslide.

The tourist and home seeker, the real estate agent and the manufacturer, the trolley and the electric light denote the march of civilization, but something most attractive and in a way very precious will vanish when Los Angeles absorbs into its feverish activity this fine old Santa Anita ranch.

Even in these, its last days, it seems to stand remote and aloof with a certain strength of dignity and independence. It does not belong with that complex and interwoven civilization in which a man must depend upon other men to produce all that he eats and wears and uses. It is opposed to all that makes the life and commerce of a city.

Such an estate, if put to it, could to-day maintain its population of perhaps a thousand men, women

---

## *The Greater America*

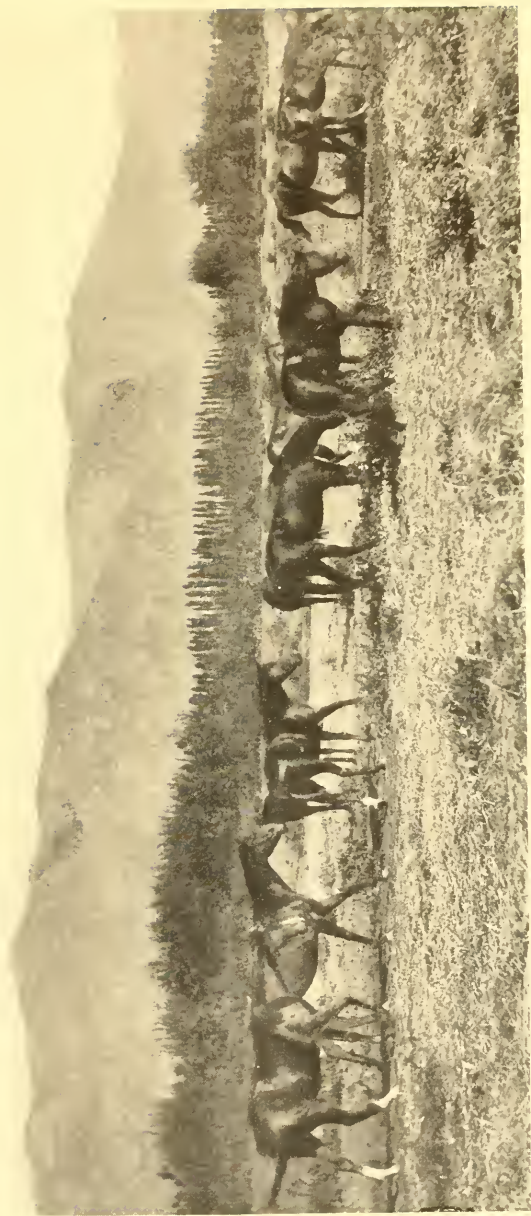
---

and children without commerce with the world beyond. Cut the railroads, and Los Angeles must face starvation within three or four days. It consumes and devours with titanic appetite, but it does not produce.

Out at Santa Anita, however, its busy community could be clothed and fed in comfort and even luxury, without help from a railroad. Even during "Lucky" Baldwin's proprietorship, the twelve-mule freight teams, with jingling bells on the collars, trailed to and from Los Angeles, as the only link of communication with the outside world, and the people of the estate were as comfortable and possibly as happy as they are to-day.

The lord of this ranch can drive eighteen miles in a straight line across his own acres. In such a tour he will pass his own general merchandise store, maintained for the convenience of his own people, the school supported for their children, the blacksmith shop, the church and the post office, all belonging to the equipment of the estate. He will pass through his vast orange and fig and olive orchards, his walnut groves and his vineyards where the Mission grape is gathered from the gnarled vines planted by the padres. There are also one hundred acres of lemons, one hundred acres of grape fruit, two thousand acres of vegetables, and twenty thousand acres of corn, hay and small grains. His thirty thousand sheep graze on the brown hillsides, and he could clothe his people





*"Lucky" Baldwin's thoroughbreds at pasture*



---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

with their wool, if he wished. His wheat ranch could feed them, his three thousand head of cattle could provide beef and leather. In other fields are five hundred work mules and five hundred draught and carriage horses.

These sixty thousand acres are divided into several ranches, each in charge of a superintendent, who in turn reports to a general manager, who is responsible to the owner. It is a paternal, feudal system, highly specialized by means of the American talent for systematic administration and organization.

Toiling in the flooding sunshine of these smiling fields and slopes are Japanese and Mexicans and negroes and Chinese and Americans, almost a thousand of them, scattered over many miles of country. Tucked away in the corners of little valleys, under the spreading oaks, you will find the villages of this motley population. In the Mexican colony of thatched and flimsy huts, little brown children run about with no more clothing than would dust a gun-barrel. In sheep-shearing time the population is enlivened by the coming of the band of half-breeds and Indians and "Greasers," who make festival with the residents when the work is done. When one wanders about the odd corners of the ranch, watching the quiet and ancient habit of tilling and garnering the abundant fruits of the earth and the pasture, the twentieth century bustle of Los Angeles becomes a thing remote and incongruous.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

While this estate mirrors so largely the life of the Spanish grants of the early settlement of the Pacific Coast, its latest owner in himself supplies a chapter which covers the last half century almost, from the time when Frémont, the Pathfinder, unfurled the Stars and Stripes in Los Angeles in 1846. While the stout adobe walls of the home on Santa Anita ranch preserve the legends of a century and more ago, the aged man who dwells therein is a relic and a reminder of an era even more vivid and picturesque. "Lucky" Baldwin belongs with the flamboyant days of the Forty-niners, with the age when life on the Pacific Coast was a melodrama of great fortunes won and flung away with lavish hand and high heart, the era of the argonauts, the builders, and the gamblers with life and gold.

In 1853, or more than a half century ago, a little party of gold seekers, with a meager outfit of horses and wagons, started for California from the village of Racine, Wisconsin. In command of this adventurous expedition was a young man who took with him his wife and infant daughter. His name was E. J. Baldwin, and he made a wise choice in shaking from his restless feet the dust of a tamer civilization. He needed a larger theater of action for his pent-up and surging activities. While trailing through the mountains of Utah the pioneers were attacked by Indians, who were beaten off during a six-hour fight in which young Baldwin killed their chief. After

---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

six months of hardship the party reached Hangtown (later called Placerville), in California.

Here Baldwin tarried and began placer mining. He appears to have been no more than an ordinary red-shirted argonaut, meeting the ups and downs of mining luck, until the discovery of the Comstock Lode at Virginia City. Thither he drifted, and discovered that his natural bent was gambling with the mines that other men had opened. Amid a whirlwind of speculation he fought his way with such success that he loomed from the smoke in a few months as "Lucky" Baldwin, the man who had cleaned up seven and a half million dollars in the gigantic deals in the stock of the Ophir mines.

San Francisco was the Mecca of those lucky sons of fortune who were rearing a great city by the Golden Gate. As a stock and mining speculator, "Lucky" Baldwin shone resplendent, but he was also a loyal son of San Francisco. He built hotels and theaters and business blocks, even while he was amazing that far from conservative community by madly freakish extravagances.

In a very lucid interval he bought all the Spanish grants he could find near Los Angeles, and there spent a million in making this ranch of his not only a splendidly productive property, but also one of the most beautiful estates ever laid out in this or any other country. It was his hobby, his pet, and he planted miles of avenues with noble shade trees, and made

---

## *The Greater America*

---

wonderful tropical gardens, so that to-day his home is surrounded by a paradise of vernal beauty.

"Lucky" Baldwin became interested in the turf while he was in the heyday of his wealth, health and headlong vigor. He made Santa Anita ranch famous as a home of winning thoroughbreds, and his racing colors flashed on every noted track. The racing stable is still a part of the ranch, and in the lush pastures wander costly bands of colts and brood mares, while in the stables are such sires and famous winners of historic events as Emperor of Norfolk, and Rey del Santa Anita, and Cruzadas. The mighty sire Grimsted, who produced more stake winners than any other horse in America, is buried in a park-like enclosure, over the gateway of which is an arch inscribed with the words, "The Home of Grimsted." The grave and park are tended with scrupulous care, and betoken a strain of sentiment in this rough-and-tumble hero of a hundred bizarre adventures and hazards, "Lucky" Baldwin.

More than once it has been reported that this Westerner's fortune has been swept away in speculation, or plunging on the turf, or in extravagant whimsicalities, yet through it all he has clung to his beloved Santa Anita. The ranch was heavily mortgaged to help him weather one heavy storm, yet the value of this land has risen with such amazing swiftness, because of its nearness to Los Angeles, that in the end he has a splendid fortune in the estate, which can

---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

be sold for more than fifteen hundred dollars an acre, as fast as he is willing to let it be chopped up by the city broker.

In his old age "Lucky" Baldwin retired to his ranch, there to spend the little time of his life that might be left for him. When I met him there last year, he was still alert in mind and vigorous of frame, a wiry, sharp-visaged little man past his eightieth year, who had endured enough of reckless living and bruising shocks of fortune to kill ordinary men in their prime. Three mornings each week he arose at daylight and drove to his racing stables to see his string of thoroughbreds in their morning gallops around a half-mile track. They were being prepared for their campaign on far-away tracks, but he would nevermore see them break and wheel in the start, and thunder past the finish post. His sight was fast failing, but he knew and loved his horses, as they filed by him, one by one.

Thus, after as stormy and colorful a career as befell any of those bold jugglers with titanic fortunes in the days of gold, he found a placid refuge on this noble ranch, the creation of which had been the work of his youth. With all his faults, and they have been many and notorious, he was one of the builders of that empire of the Pacific; and when San Francisco was overwhelmed by earthquake and fire, the destruction included no small share of "Lucky" Baldwin's creative effort in the upbuilding of that noble city.



---

## *The Greater America*

---

This ranch of his is a monument also to his constructive genius. Its successful operation has been a task demanding unusual talent and ability, and these qualities of his have preserved it intact with its imposing array of belated industries and activities in an age in whose social economy it can find no place. Just as he is a relic of another age in the expansion of this nation, so his ranch harks farther back into a more remote era and affords a vanishing glimpse of the life which was before the Stars and Stripes were flown over this vast territory to the west of the Rockies, and south of the area first explored and claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company's pioneers who invaded the Pacific Slope from the north.

Not far from Santa Anita ranch is the old Mission of San Gabriel, whose life was co-existent with that of these Spanish grants and ranches. The gray bell tower, the massive adobe walls, and the quiet gardens where once walked the black-robed padres, and where their Indian converts toiled, have been preserved to lend a little touch of old-world atmosphere to the landscape of to-day. They will be kept as memorials, but the broad fields and orchards, the pastures and the groves of Santa Anita are being submerged in the roaring tide of American progress in material wealth and faith in the future.

"Lucky" Baldwin sat on the wide porch of his adobe mansion, whose walls were a Spanish fort a hundred and fifty years ago. On every side stretched





*In the Mexican quarter of Santa Anita*



---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

the smiling fertility of his principality, watered by gushing streams from artesian wells, a water system as extensive as that of many cities. In the background marched the brown ramparts of the Sierra Madre Mountains, and even on those heights one could discern a ribbon-like trail cut for the sight-seeing tourist. The old man indulged in no poetic reverie over the passing of the old order of things. His mind dwelt on what he had done toward making the building of California and San Francisco. Thus in his last days this battered survivor of the blazing days of gilded toil and folly by the Golden Gate wished to be remembered for what he had done for the land he loved, and in this he showed the spirit of your true Californian.

“If you will look in Bancroft’s ‘Chronicles of the Builders,’” he said, “you will find all you want to know about me. Don’t take any stock in all the stories you hear about my foolishness in slinging fortunes around. There’s a set of harness out there in the stable that cost me eight thousand dollars, and I’ve had a run for my money, but I helped make San Francisco a stronger, bigger city, and that counts for something. And I’ve made a beautiful spot of this ranch, and I’ve held it together, and I don’t expect to live to see it cut up entirely. It’s my home, and it means a d—n sight more to me because I made it, sixty thousand acres, and every acre working for me.”

---

## *The Greater America*

---

His mood veered and his faded eye twinkled as he observed:

"Jim Jeffries was down to see me the other day, and he told me he made twenty thousand dollars in a fight. I told him that I won five million dollars in one fight when I was in my prime, and that I guessed it paid better than pugilism while it lasted."

"Lucky" Baldwin, a type of the days of the young and riotous California, is too old to meet and conquer the new conditions which have shoved his ranch and himself far into the background of progress. As Los Angeles pictures the expanding Americanism of this century, so H. E. Huntington, the man who has led in its promotion, is a type of the American builder of to-day; and as he has driven his electric roads through the heart of Santa Anita ranch, so he is everywhere in his part of the country infusing old conditions with the new spirit of progress.

There has been nothing of the bizarre or spectacular about his programme of expansion. A trained railway man, schooled by his uncle, C. P. Huntington, he has swung his energy away from the steam road to become the foremost promoter of the electric trolley as a means of developing and exploiting natural resources. He has made all the towns of Southern California near neighbors of Los Angeles, and this task has been accomplished in less than ten years. First came the purchase of existing lines, then consolidation and reorganization, and after that rebuilding

---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

and new construction, until within the city limits of Los Angeles alone there are two hundred miles of trolley tracks. Now you can whirl out into the country over standard-gauge, double-track lines operated by automatic signal systems, at express speed.

The real estate "boom" of Los Angeles cannot be fairly weighed without a knowledge of this wonderful transportation development. H. E. Huntington has made fortunes for others, while at the same time he has reaped great wealth for himself. He had bought up great tracts of unimproved land within a few miles of Los Angeles, and then put an electric road through the tree property thus acquired. Of course the coming of the railroad has increased the realty values by hundreds per cent. and Mr. Huntington, having bought on a certainty, has not suffered by this method of operation.

At the same time it should be remembered, even though it be the fashion to sling bricks at the railway magnate on general principles as an oppressor and a robber, that for every million H. E. Huntington has reaped from his transactions, the community has benefited tenfold in increased property valuations and ease of communication.

It is a magical sort of an operation, this development of the Los Angeles country. A small rancher is struggling to make both ends meet, away off in what appears to be an isolated corner of the landscape. He lives perhaps several miles from his nearest

---

## *The Greater America*

---

neighbor, and it is an all-day haul to get to the nearest market. Along come the surveyors, and then the construction gangs, and presto! the electric road has linked this ranch with Los Angeles by no more than half or three-quarters of an hour in time. The little poverty-stricken ranch has become suburban property overnight, and our son of the soil is in affluence and thinks "The Arabian Nights" tame reading. The chances are even that he blossoms out as a real estate agent and invades Los Angeles with a bundle of blueprint maps under his arm.

As a result of this prodigious railway development, the fifty thousand visitors who frequent Los Angeles most of the time no sooner land in the city than they plan to get out of it. The hotels are built like business blocks, essentially metropolitan of aspect. This disappoints the stranger who expects to find palm trees and gardens under his hotel window. He soon discovers, however, that the hotel is for eating and sleeping, nothing more. He streams with the multitude into the big street cars, and flies into the country in almost any direction, to seashore, mountain, tropical city and resort, covering a hundred miles of landscape in a day, while the Pacific breezes blow through him, and he speeds over a dustless roadbed. He can visit one or more of fifty attractive places every day and return to the city for dinner.

When time hangs heavy on his hands he can find abundant entertainment in trying to figure out the



*A Mexican sheep herder and his flock*







---

## *Where Ranch and City Meet*

---

why and wherefore of Los Angeles, and he must come back in the final issue to the three factors of climate, trolleys and advertising. As cosmopolitan a city as there is in America, made up of pilgrims from every State of East and West, these two hundred thousand men, women and children are fused in the smelting pot of local pride and enthusiasm until they are sure in their hearts that there is no place on God's green footstool worthy to be compared with Los Angeles, and that even though its present prosperity is fairly staggering, its future holds possibilities even more awe-inspiring. It is, in a way, like an air plant, taking its sustenance from the climate and not from the soil, and there is no danger of bankrupting this chief asset.

The commercial bodies of this lusty young metropolis have spent three hundred and fifty thousand dollars within ten years in directly advertising its attractions. They have reaped big dividends and to-day their city is the best-known pleasure and health resort in the world. San Francisco had a large share of this common western spirit, and neither fire nor earthquake can cripple it. The city which will rise on the ruins of the old San Francisco will be more like Los Angeles, essentially modern in every way, and proud of its modernity. The storied days of the Forty-niners have been obliterated in San Francisco, the memories of the argonauts have been destroyed, but their spirit lives and shines.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Los Angeles is sweeping away the last traces of the old era, and faces the future, not the past. We may sigh for the passing of Santa Anita ranch, but where thirty thousand sheep and cattle graze, as many Americans will be dwelling in their own homes within the life of this generation.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE GOLD CAMPS OF THE DESERT

*"If it looks good to you, get to it."*

THIS is a western slogan in which faith and works are so closely packed that another word would spoil it. There is lacking the literary adornment of those "creeds" and "symphonies" which, done in a very pretty type or stamped on a ragged bit of leather, exhort us to plain living and high thinking with due regard for the birds and flowers. No, there is none of the tinkling "preachment" doctrine of conduct in this big, rugged call to action, "If it looks good to you, get to it." It is not preached, but lived by men who are too busy to prate much about the "simple life," and it says nothing about obstacles in the way. It would be hard to focus with more brevity and force the virile spirit of the Americans who have made and bulwarked their nation. I soon discovered that this was the war cry whose inspiration has peopled the desert of Nevada within the last five years.

"It looked good" to many thousand men who wanted to seek gold, and they "went to it," and made cities in the most desolate and forbidding corner of the United States.

It is probable that this country will not see another

---

## *The Greater America*

---

great "gold stampede," wherefore this corner of the West was the next goal of my pilgrimage after swinging up from among the lush vineyards and smiling orchards of Southern California. Before these latest discoveries were made in Nevada, it was generally believed that the frenzied rush of armies of treasure seekers must be classed as a vanished part of the frontier life and conditions. Old prospectors, however, with the clamor of Cripple Creek still echoing in their memories, would wag their gray beards with a knowing air and trudge into the desert and among the mountains, confident that other bonanzas were waiting to be revealed.

Instead of seeking new sources of supply the men with more capital than imagination were devising new methods to work over old diggings. Their mighty electric dredges were turning over the placer gravel washed out by the Forty-niners, and by a miracle of economy making it profitable to extract eleven cents' worth of gold from a ton of earth. Or their stamp mills and scientific processes were pounding up and milling the low-grade ore of Alaska and the mountains of the West. The gold hunter and producer were being rapidly stripped of their ancient red-blooded romance of adventure by the prosaic methods of twentieth century enterprise, which have conspired to banish the cowboy and the sailor.

Nevada was a butt for jests among her sister States, which delighted to record such items as:

---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

"Three hoboes were thrown off a train while crossing the Nevada desert the other day. Their arrival doubled the population of the county in which they hit the alkali, and a real estate boom was started on the strength of it."

The State of bare, brown mountains and sand and sagebrush was beginning to feel the stir of the irrigation movement, but the heyday of her mining glory seemed to slumber with a dead past. Silver camps that were hilarious cities of thousands of men and millions in wealth thirty years ago had dwindled to ruined hamlets whose brick blocks stood tenantless and forlorn. The queen of them all, Virginia City, was no more than a ghost of what she had been in the days of the Comstock lode.

Those were the times when the poor miner John Mackay went to Nevada with only his pick and his stout arms; when Fair, the blue-eyed Scotchman, walked into Virginia without a dollar, and "hung up" his board with the widow Rooney up the gulch, until he should make his strike; when two young Irishmen, Flood and O'Brien, were digging in the hills with their comrade, George Hearst, all of them red-shirted prospectors together, with no other capital than stout hearts and stouter backs.

Their fortunes have built railroads, laid cables under seas and flung their children into the spangled world of fashion. The Comstock yielded more than two hundred millions of silver in sixteen years. Its

---

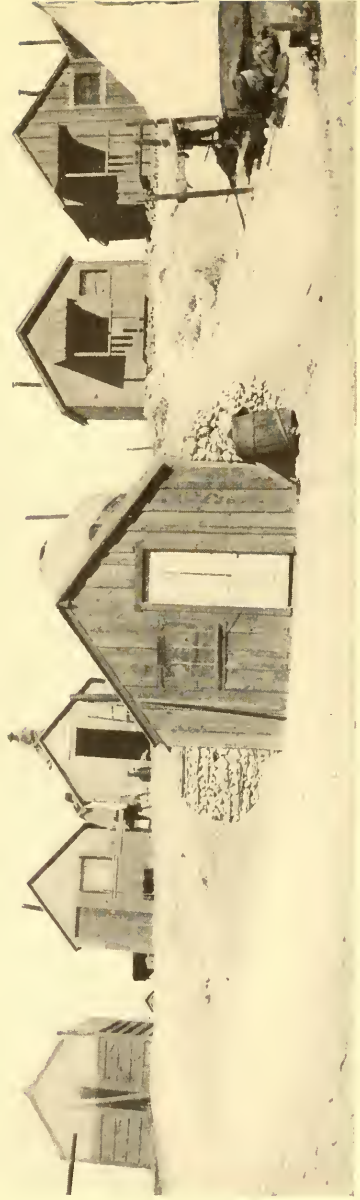
## *The Greater America*

---

mines were the lifeblood of the Pacific Coast. But when their glory departed, Nevada went to sleep again. Like the State in which he made the first discovery of the lode that bears his name, H. T. P. Comstock could not cling to the riches he had laid bare for others. After wandering in poverty for years, he blew out his brains near Bozeman City, Montana, in 1870.

The times have changed since then, and men have changed with them. The new mining camps of Nevada are alive with the old spirit that laughs at hardship and danger, and their builders have earned a place in the latter pages of the story of the American frontier. The professional "bad man" is a missing figure, and the contrast between these present-day camps of Tonopah, Goldfield and Bullfrog, and their predecessors of the Comstock, is wide and impressive. Such colorful gentlemen as stalked through Virginia City thirty years ago may be glimpsed in these bits of life and manners as told by one of them:

"A gambler of Herculean frame, with a huge black beard that gave him a most ferocious appearance, cheated a miner out of four or five hundred dollars in a poker game. The miner saw that he had been swindled after his money was gone, and demanded his cash. The big gambler laughed in his face. The miner, who was a small and inoffensive-looking person, left the place without more words. Some of the crowd in the saloon told the big sport that his man had gone off to heel himself, and that



*In the heart of a gold camp*





---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

there would be trouble later on. The big man was not alarmed—he was not going to be frightened away. He sat on a chair in the back room, near an open window, his head thrown back and his legs cocked up. He didn't care how many weapons the miner might bring.

“‘Why, gentlemen,’ he roared, ‘you don’t know me—you don’t know who I am. I’m the Wild Boar of Temaha. The click of a six-shooter is music to my ear, and a bowie knife is my looking-glass.’ (Here he happened to look toward the door, and saw the miner coming in with a sawed-off shotgun.) ‘But a shotgun lets me out,’ and he went through the window head first.”

While I was going into Tonopah from Reno a mining engineer recalled his earlier experiences in the sizzling towns of the frontier.

“I was a boy in Tombstone in 1881,” said he, “and saw ‘Doc’ Holliday and Wyatt and Virgil Earp wipe out the McClowrie and Clanton outfit. One of the Earps was a deputy United States marshal, another was the town marshal, and a third, Morgan Earp, was a Wells Fargo ‘shotgun man’ or express messenger. There was a bad feeling between the Earps and the gang of cowboys led by Curly Bill, who were accused of holding up the stage and killing the driver. The two McClowries and the two Clantons accused the Earps of having a hand in the hold-up. The climax came when the Earps sent out word

that the cow-men must not ride into Tombstone and shoot up the town any more. I was hiding behind an adobe house down at the corral when the McClowries and Clantons rode in to accept the challenge. It was a fight to the finish. Two of the Earp crowd were wounded, but all of the other side were killed or mortally hurt right there at the corral.

"A little later Morgan Earp was killed in a saloon by a load of buckshot fired through the window near which he was playing billiards."

Now, the two surviving Earps, perhaps hoping that the frontier had come back to them, drifted into the new Goldfield district within the last year or so. Virgil Earp died in the Miners' Hospital at Goldfield, with his boots off, last autumn, after a most prosaic illness. Wyatt ran a little saloon in Tonopah for a while, and moved on. Once he flourished his guns while drunk, and they were rudely taken away from him by an undersized sheriff.

This was in a mining camp of five thousand souls in which it had not yet been found necessary to organize a town government. Such is the law and order that reigns on the frontier of to-day. The story of the discovery of the first of this chain of desert gold camps appealed to me as worth more than passing mention, because of the rugged honesty of the leading actor in this gigantic melodrama.

Six years ago a desert rancher named "Jim" Butler was prospecting in southern Nevada, packing

---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

his outfit along on the backs of six burros, trudging among the mountains a hundred and fifty miles from a railroad, in a country which an experienced miner would have laughed at. It had none of the signs of gold-bearing rock, and in his "plumb ignorance" Butler plodded along "forty miles from water and one mile from hell," trusting to gold seeker's luck, and not at all confident of making a strike big enough to keep him in tobacco money.

One night he camped at Tonopah Spring and found some rock that "looked good to him." He broke off a few chunks, loaded them on a burro and rambled home with them in the course of time. In the town of Belmont, near his ranch, his rock was greeted with light-hearted incredulity, and he was about to throw it away when a young lawyer named Oddie pricked up his ears, and with the rashness of youth offered to have the samples assayed. Butler went back to his ranch in Monitor Valley, and betook himself to the more important business of harvesting his hay crop. He had forgotten about his rock when Oddie sent him word that the stuff assayed several hundred dollars a ton in gold and silver.

Even then the doubting rancher did not think it worth while to make a trip after more rock, but his very capable wife kept at him until he hitched up a team and drove into Belmont. Oddie had business of his own by this time and could not go with them, so Butler and his wife made the lonely journey back

---

## *The Greater America*

---

to the Tonopah Spring region to look after his "false alarm."

This was more than three months after his discovery, which indicates that Jim Butler was none of your get-rich-quick financiers.

He staked out a claim for his wife, one for Oddie, and a third for himself. Three months more passed before Butler and Oddie loaded two wagons with grub and tools for doing development work on their claims. Oddie hauled water from the spring four miles away, cooked and looked after the horses, sharpened tools and helped Butler sink a shaft. In this back-breaking fashion they got out a ton of ore and hauled it fifty miles to Belmont, from which it was freighted across the desert a hundred miles farther to the nearest railroad at Austin, to be shipped to a smelter. This ton netted six hundred dollars in gold, and the two men, whose cash capital was twenty-five dollars, were able to hire a few men to help them.

By winter the news sifted to the outside world that a rich strike had been made in that far-away corner of the Nevada desert, and men began to "get to it" from Carson and Reno, and the small camps in the mountains. Jim Butler decided to lease claims to the newcomers, and staked out locations for them as fast as they arrived. Another year and the human trickle had swelled to a flood, and capitalists were scenting the treasure and sending in their scouts. A year from the time he had swung the first pick on his

---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

locations, Butler sold the original claims for \$336,000, and shrewdly took part of his interest in stock of the company that was formed.

The rise of these shares has since brought the purchase price of the claims to a value of more than a million dollars.

Meanwhile this Jim Butler had been making additional locations which included part of the future town site as well as other rich ledges in the mountains. He showed himself to be very much of a man, which is a good deal better than being very much of a millionaire. He leased out hundreds of claims in the height of the rush when the gold fever was adding the brains of men, as it has always done. But it never threw Jim Butler off his balance. He refused to have written deeds and contracts with his customers. Transactions whose total ran into the millions were bound only by the spoken word of Jim Butler. Nor could a fabulous strike on one of his leases ever tempt him to go back on his word. The town lots he sold when values were going skyward every few minutes were transferred with no paper to show for it. Broken grub-stake contracts, claim-jumping suits, and real estate disputes raged all around him, but nobody who did business with Jim Butler got into a lawsuit. That capable wife of his helped him keep track of his transactions, and an old account book held them all.

Within two years Tonopah was a town of four

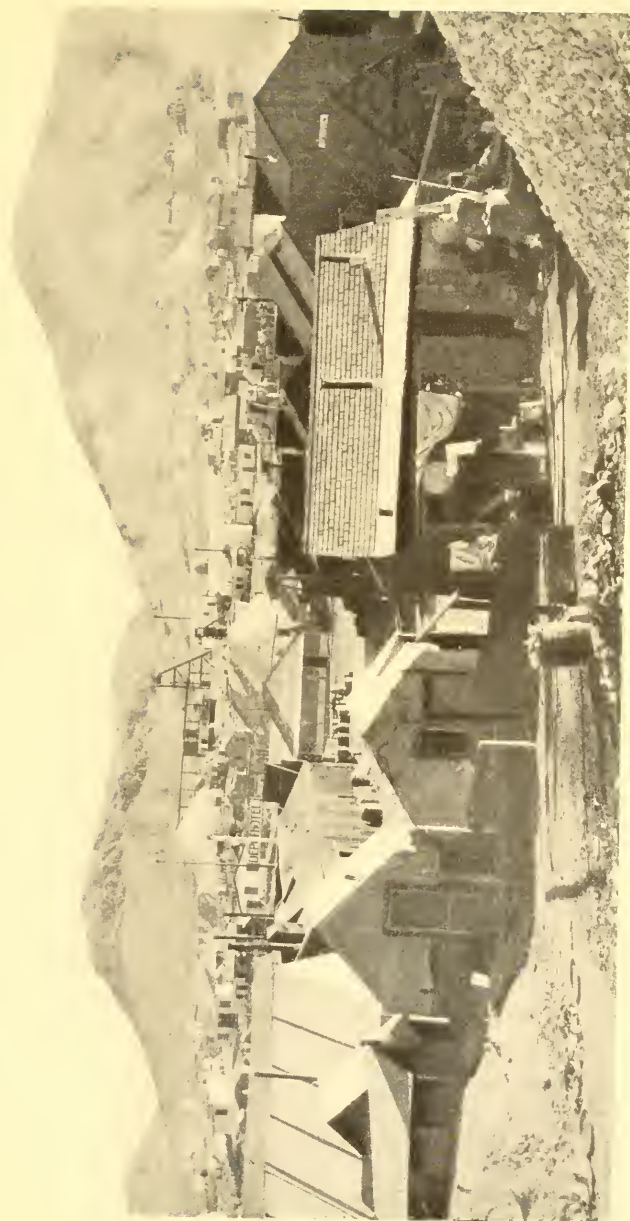
---

## *The Greater America*

---

thousand people, mostly men. It had been lighted with electricity, and a water system put in. There were two churches, a graded school with a hundred pupils, a club, two newspapers; and a railroad had crawled over the desert, built by the Tonopah Mining Company with \$600,000 of its profits from its gold diggings. Tonopah took on a settled and civilized air, with its stone business and bank blocks rising in the midst of the shacks and tents that swarmed on its disheveled outskirts. Mining corporations, with millions of eastern capital behind them, were in possession of the richest claims, the country round had been prospected by thousands of invaders, and so the vanguard moved on south into the wilderness. At that time, if your water supply held out and you did not get lost or die of thirst along the edge of Death Valley, you could travel two hundred miles and find no town, no human settlement, except a shack or two beside the springs that were from thirty to fifty miles apart. Nothing alive flourished in the country except rattlesnakes and tarantulas; nothing grew there except sagebrush, cactus and mesquite. It was in the very heart of what is left of the "Great American Desert." Water, food, fuel—everything had to be hauled through the mountain passes and sand from the nearest railroad. The heat in summer was frightful, rising to a hundred and twenty degrees in the shade, where there was any shade, and lingering over a hundred degrees at midnight in midsummer.





*A residence section of Tonopah*





---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

While in Alaska the gold hunters' stories are of snow and ice and bitter cold, of dog sleds and snowshoes and furs, this rush into the desert was framed in clouds of white and choking dust, amid the peril of heat and thirst.

Thousands turned backward, and hundreds pushed on. Their ardor flamed afresh when thirty miles south of Tonopah a second "big strike" was made, and the town of Goldfield rose over night. The lucky locators and lessees began to find out ore whose total values ran into the millions in a very few months, and in the first year the wealth dug out of the desert amounted to more than the production of Cripple Creek in its first two years of activity. Within eighteen months, nearly ten thousand people were at Goldfield, and the railroad had pushed on from Tonopah.

Still the prospectors headed southward, away from the town and the railroad, and sixty miles beyond Goldfield they were the pioneers in another stirring stampede into the desert. The Bullfrog district became the firing line of the gold-seeking invasion. When the gold was found only three families were living within eighty-five miles of the location, a rancher named Beatty, one Howell, who had a little ranch by a spring, and Panamint Joe, a Shoshone Indian who was camped with a few of his tribe near another spring where there was a patch of watered grazing land. In less than a year four thousand

---

## *The Greater America*

---

people were living in the new-fledged towns of Bullfrog, Beatty, and Rhyolite. They were linked with the railroad sixty miles away by a line of automobiles, daily stages and toiling trains of freighters' wagons. Telephone lines were strung across the desert to Goldfield, and these isolated, desert-bound settlements were in touch with the outside world as soon as they were big enough to be named.

Tonopah, meanwhile, as the oldest of these camps along the path of the dusty argonauts, had lost its floating population and was in a second stage of solid development, with mines in operation and ore going by solid train loads to the smelters at Salt Lake. Speculation in mining stock succeeded the gambling fever of the prospector, and if other excitement was wanted, it must be sought in the resorts where the faro layout and the roulette wheel held sway.

Although the "modern improvements" were hurried into Tonopah and Goldfield with an amazing speed that makes this peopling of the desert a modern miracle, it was nevertheless a new civilization, whose raw edges could not be trimmed off in one year, or even five. These are still frontier outposts, although they belong to a tamed frontier. They seethe with strong, bold currents of life, and men are counted for what they are, and not for what they have, as it was in the days of old.

Conspicuous among the veterans of the Klondike rush who mingled with Australian, Californian, and South African prospectors in the busy Goldfield streets

---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

was "Diamondfield Jack" Davis, as rampantly a picturesque character as ever enlivened frontier history. While mining in Idaho he had achieved the unique distinction of being three times sentenced to be hanged for the alleged murder of two men in a labor war. Twice reprieved, things looked dark for "Diamondfield Jack" when the fatal day again rolled around. His enemies cut the telegraph wires so that the governor's message of pardon could not be sent through in time to head off the deadly activity of the sheriff. The document was hustled along by relays of pony riders, and the last rider spurred his foaming steed up to the gallows in time to see the noose dangling about the neck of "Diamondfield Jack."

It is to be presumed that the courier waved the pardon over his head and shouted: "Villain, stay your hand. You are about to take the life of an innocent man." This touch is needed to round up the dramatic units of this lurid episode which real life borrowed from the stage.

"Diamondfield Jack" was treated with respect and even deference when I was in Goldfield, and although his vivid past shone about him, there was nothing of the "bad man" or terror in his commonplace and industrious demeanor. Later events showed, however, that this Davis held in reserve certain qualities of character which filled a needed gap in the business activities of these desert gold fields.

Last year the mining camp union, which vain-gloriously calls itself the "Industrial Workmen of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

the World," decided to throw into total eclipse by means of a boycott those enterprising journals, the *Tonopah Sun* and the *Goldfield Sun*. The editors of these twin luminaries were of the pioneer breed, and not easily daunted, but the boycotters, because of the strength of their labor organization, so coerced the merchants of the two camps that they ceased advertising.

The union was not satisfied with this victory, but declared that the newspapers could not be sold on the streets. The valiant editors stuck to their guns with such fusillades as this:

### **COME ON, YOU COWARDLY CURS!**

**A Committee of the Goldfield I. W. W. Called at the Goldfield Sun Office To-Day and Notified Four Employees that They Must Join the I. W. W. by To-Morrow or Be Run Out of Town.**

The I. W. W. men who made the call are Joe Smith, walking delegate for the anarchists; a man named Tims, who is a member of the fire department, and another party whose name is not yet known here. They demanded that every employee join their band of conspirators, which flourishes under the name of a union. The demand includes printers and pressmen, who are members of the American Federation to a man.

Now it is up to the dirty scoundrels to start something. The *Sun* is ready for the scoundrels.

Come on, you cowards, if you are looking for something.

---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

Newsboys were bullied and beaten until none of them dared try to sell the papers. After a time four brave young men volunteered to peddle the *Goldfield Sun*. They had no more than started on their venture-some routes when a mob of union men charged them, with oaths and threats and brandished weapons. The flight of the newspaper merchants led them toward the brokerage office of Mr. "Diamondfield Jack" Davis, who was just then engaged in an eloquent eulogy of the shares of certain claims for the benefit of an eastern visitor. The mob poured through the office door, and Mr. Davis was reasonably annoyed. Rising without haste he unbelted two revolvers of prodigious caliber and shoving them in the faces of the nearest pursuers he spoke in a terse summary of the prevailing fashion in slang:

"I'll give you until I count twenty-three to beat it."

The mob had unanimously scattered before "Diamondfield Jack" counted "three," in terror of name and weapons combined. He had just returned from a visit to San Francisco, and this expressive exhibit of the social disorder in Goldfield interested him to such an extent that he at once determined to volunteer as a newsboy. Thereafter until the boycott was broken, the public-spirited Mr. Davis daily paraded the streets of Goldfield, a bulky bundle of *Suns* tucked under one arm, and two long-barreled "forty-fours," hanging by swivels from his belt. No objections on

---

## *The Greater America*

---

the part of the miners' union were made a matter of public record.

Allied with Mr. Davis in this defense of private rights was Mr. "Black" Allen, editor of the *Goldfield Sun*. He also was a quiet and well-mannered man who was ready to back his faith with his works. After his life had been threatened by the miners' union until the matter wore on his nerves, he sauntered into the headquarters of his assailants. He was alone, and local history adds with a touch of pride in the fitness of things, that he was carefully dressed in a spick-and-span suit of white flannels, a silk shirt, and a blue "butterfly" tie. His natty wardrobe included also two derringers in the side pockets of his flannel coat. Some thirty odd members of the "Industrial Order of the World" were loafing in their rooms when this frontier editor of the year of our Lord 1906 appeared among them and remarked in an even voice:

"If any of you dirty, cowardly loafers are looking for trouble, now is the time to begin. I don't believe there is one real live man in your whole blankety outfit. If there does happen to be one let him step to the front and declare himself. You've been going to kill me till I'm tired and sick of it."

There befell a silence that could have been heard from Goldfield to the head of Death Valley, and while the miners were staring at him, bluffed and beaten, the sturdy young man twisted one end of his



*The main street of Goldfield*







---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

black mustache with a jaunty air, turned on his heel and went back to his desk to prepare a triple-leaded editorial headed:

“Cowardly Bluffers Fail to Make Good Their Threats.”

The petulant pop of the pistol is almost unknown in the desert, however, and the six-shooter is not a commonplace adornment of the well-dressed male. The gambling house, saloon and dance hall, however, are populous and profitable business enterprises and they dot the streets “gay and frequent.” Because public gambling is licensed by law in Nevada, these mining camps have a more vivid streak of frontier conditions than can be found anywhere else. The tanned and dusty men in boots, leggings and corduroys who throng the streets of Tonopah when the day’s work is done, flock into the gambling houses either to play or to look on by the way of diversion.

When I drifted into the “Tonopah Club” the bar was crowded and the big room jammed with men who were drifting from one gambling table to another. There was much heavy play and some hard drinking, but no loud talk, no boisterous profanity, no ruffianly drunkenness. The place was quieter than the average camp meeting. If one was looking for surviving phases of the frontier, he would be disappointed at first glimpse of so singularly docile a gathering.

But in front of a faro table a brace of grizzled

---

## *The Greater America*

---

prospectors were "piping" along with fifty-cent chips. They were almost cleaned out, and to the average town-bred man, whose chief worry is lest he lose his job, their situation would seem perilous and even hair raising. For they had come in from the desert for a "whirl," and when their modest stakes were gone, they would be without a dollar in the world. They were aware of this fact, but it did not disturb them. They had been "broke" many times, and they expected to "go broke" many times more. They had been prudent enough to buy a little store of bacon, beans and flour before they embarked on this ruinous evening, and in the morning they would pack their burros and trail off into the mountains to live another month or two without seeing any other human being until they could come back to town for another grub-stake. And if they couldn't raise the cash for the next grub-stake—well, that time was far distant, and it's a poor kind of a man that will worry when he has enough to eat for a month ahead.

So they dutifully and cheerfully went "broke," and strolled over to watch a crowd that pressed around a roulette table. Three young men in well-worn khaki were playing with stacks of twenty-dollar gold pieces in lieu of chips. Their speech was that of the campus and the club of the eastern seaboard, and it was likely that they learned the rudiments of this pastime in a metropolitan palace of art presided over by one Richard Canfield. They staked twenty dollars on a

---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

number and one of them won a thousand dollars with two turns of the wheel. Now there was a sudden buzz of talk and the word was passed:

“Here comes Jack C—— for a whirl. Now you’ll see some action.”

The little fish retired and made room at the roulette table for the noted plunger, who had dropped in to put into circulation a few thousands’ worth of the gold he had dug from a near-by hillside. The dealer raised the limit to the ceiling, and the stout man of the rough-and-ready garb lost ten thousand dollars in an hour, and told the bartender to “set up champagne for all hands.” This generous act cost him another thousand, and he swung carelessly out to meander among the dance halls, where the jangle of battered pianos mingled with that of women’s voices that had long lost their freshness.

One of these suddenly rich and prodigal miners, in order fittingly to express his esteem for one of these nightingales of the desert, vowed in a care-free and exhilarated hour that he was going to give her a grand piano. The lady protested and said she preferred the cash, but he insisted upon the grand piano or nothing. After the ponderous instrument had been freighted across the desert behind twenty mules, at vast expense, it was found that the residence of the faded songstress was not big enough to hold it.

At the time she was living in a one-room shack built of lumber ripped from packing cases, as are many

---

## *The Greater America*

---

residents of to-day, and her house was scarcely larger than the piano box. The miner handsomely solved the problem when he embarked on his next "whirl," for he gave orders that a house be built to hold the piano, which was no mean tribute to her charms when rough lumber was costing a hundred and thirty dollars a thousand feet.

All things are in a state of change in such a town as this. The "old-timer" who goes away for three months returns to find that most of his friends have moved away, or are holding down new jobs. I wasted half a day in the company of a mining engineer who sought a friend. We found him at length, in command of a hardware store.

"What do you think of him?" said the engineer impatiently. "Last year at this time he was janitor of the bank. Then he was made assistant cashier, next he was made the full-fledged cashier, and then he up and opens a hardware store, and it's all happened inside of twelve months."

My acquaintance inquired for a gambler who had been one of the big men of the town three months before.

"He's keeping cases for a faro layout down street for four dollars a day wages," was the reply. "He had fifty thousand dollars last spring."

"Where is the professor who blew in to give Shakespearean readings just before I went away?" was the next query.

---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

“ Oh, he chucked Shakespeare into the discard, and he’s dealing faro over in the Tonopah Club.”

Mingled with these ups and downs are the bizarre and almost incredible tales of men who have found fortunes, almost with the stroke of a pick, in this God-forsaken desert, from Tonopah to Bullfrog. All kinds and conditions have won or lost in this tremendous lottery, the college-bred man from the East alongside the ragged prospector who had tramped the Klondike in vain before he drifted at the call of the latest cry of gold. I recall a Yale man in his early thirties who told me of his luck :

“ After I got out of college I began work in a broker’s office in Wall Street, expecting to touch only the high places on the road to wealth. After two years of it I was starting a crop of wrinkles trying to live in New York on my salary, and I needed fresh air bad. I broke out and came West and did a number of things. They did not pan out, as you may gather when I tell you that I followed the rush to Goldfield hoping something would turn up. I had forty-five dollars in my clothes, and this wasn’t going to last long with grub at high-water prices. I applied for work in a mine and cinched a job at four dollars a day. The boss listened to my plea that I wasn’t feeling quite fit and wanted to wait a few days before sharpening my pick. He promised to hold the job for ten days, and I went out prospecting. Inside the ten days I had staked a claim and had the ore in sight.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

It was so good that I cleaned up forty-five thousand dollars, and the boss was shy one miner. Oh, yes, I have held on to it, and it's working for me in developing some other rich properties."

College men fairly swarm in the gold camps, and many of them flocked in as soldiers of fortune.

"Some fool threw a football into the middle of the main street of Goldfield one day," said a prospector. "Then he gave a college yell, and twenty men piled out of stores and hotels and saloons so fast you couldn't count 'em. They lined up without anybody's giving the word, and played a game right on the jump. They clean wore that football out in no time."

While the college-bred man may find only disappointment and hardship in such a stormy tide of life as this, he quits it, at any rate, with a new respect for mankind, a bed-rock democracy of view-point, and a stock of elemental courage and self-reliance. For there is this to be said of the men of the desert and mountains, that they know how to take defeat with a smile for the future and a firmer set of the jaw for the present. While there are prodigal and foolish deeds among the few who find bewildering wealth in the earth, a finer wealth of manhood is developed in the hearts of the many who fail to find that which they seek.

On a hillside near Goldfield, I found an old miner who was sinking a shaft to develop his





*Hauling ore from a mine of fabulous richness*





---

## *The Gold Camps of the Desert*

---

prospect. There was a white heap of rock, a hole, and a hand windlass and bucket to mark the scene of his back-breaking endeavor. He was sharpening his picks at his little forge, and as he smote the red steel with his hammer and thrust it hissing into a water bucket, he talked with the clang of his tool for punctuation. He was gray and he wore spectacles and his back was bent. But the seamed and sun-scorched face held a certain quality of kindly tolerance of things, a kind of tempered patience and sweetness, as if he held a grip on a few simple doctrines of life gained through hard stress.

"I've been mining and prospecting for twenty-eight years," he said—"in Colorado and Wyoming and California (bang, bang)—and in Alaska and South Africa (thump, thump)—and I tried it awhile in Australia (clang, bang)—I've made two big strikes in my time—you might call 'em fortunes (s-s-s-s-s)—lost 'em both in mining propositions—I'm going down a hundred feet here and if I don't strike it then I'll quit (bang, thump)—The surface rock looks good to me—Hope I'll find some more color before my grub-stake runs out—It's hard work, but I don't know as I want to do anything else—It sort of gets hold of a man after a while so he ain't happy unless he's being disappointed and trying again."

## CHAPTER XX

### ON THE ROAD TO BULLFROG

THERE is another desert breed which is essentially modern, and which must be classed as a type of the twentieth century mining camp. This is the desert chauffeur, who opened the trail of traffic between Tonopah and Goldfield, and later drove his machines on south to the camps of the Bullfrog district. He was distinctly picturesque and as thorough-going a pioneer in his way as the freighter in his.

"I can spot one of those desert automobile drivers coming up the street as far as I can see him," said a man in Goldfield. "After he has been at it a year, he looks like a sheep herder. He gets that locoed look in his face and the same kind of a wild stare, and he looks as if you couldn't get the dust out of his system if you ran him through a stamp mill."

It is one of the many incongruities of these towns dumped down in the heart of the desert to see the prospector and his burros turn out to dodge the high-powered automobiles which snort through the unpaved streets in squadrons. Nor have so many costly machines been wrecked anywhere as on the road (if you may call it such) between Goldfield and Bullfrog. It was a stretch of sixty miles of lonely

---

## *On the Road to Bullfrog*

---

desert, without a town or a house as a refuge in case of a breakdown.

When I made the trip, which was before the railroad had pushed beyond Goldfield, it was as cheerful a gamble with respect to reaching your destination as putting out to sea in a flat-bottomed skiff.

The law of the survival of the fittest had wrought its pitiless work among the battered machines, and from the wreckage loomed the commanding figure of one Bill Brown, the only driver who guaranteed to get you across whether his auto held together or not.

He had rebuilt his car several times. So little of the original material was left that she suggested the present condition of the frigate *Constitution*. The car had been shipped into the desert, ornate, elaborate, equipped with many glittering devices which Bill Brown began to eliminate with ruthless hand. It should furnish makers and owners of automobiles with food for reflection to learn that this iconoclastic chauffeur took a thousand pounds of weight from this machine before he had her running to please him.

To look at this bucking broncho of a car, the novice would conclude that Bill Brown had laid violent hands upon her and removed most of her vitals at random. When he had discarded a vast amount of machinery and trimming, he tossed aside the body and built a new one from the sides of packing cases to save more weight and make room for more passengers.

Thus humbled and transformed, suggesting a New

---

## *The Greater America*

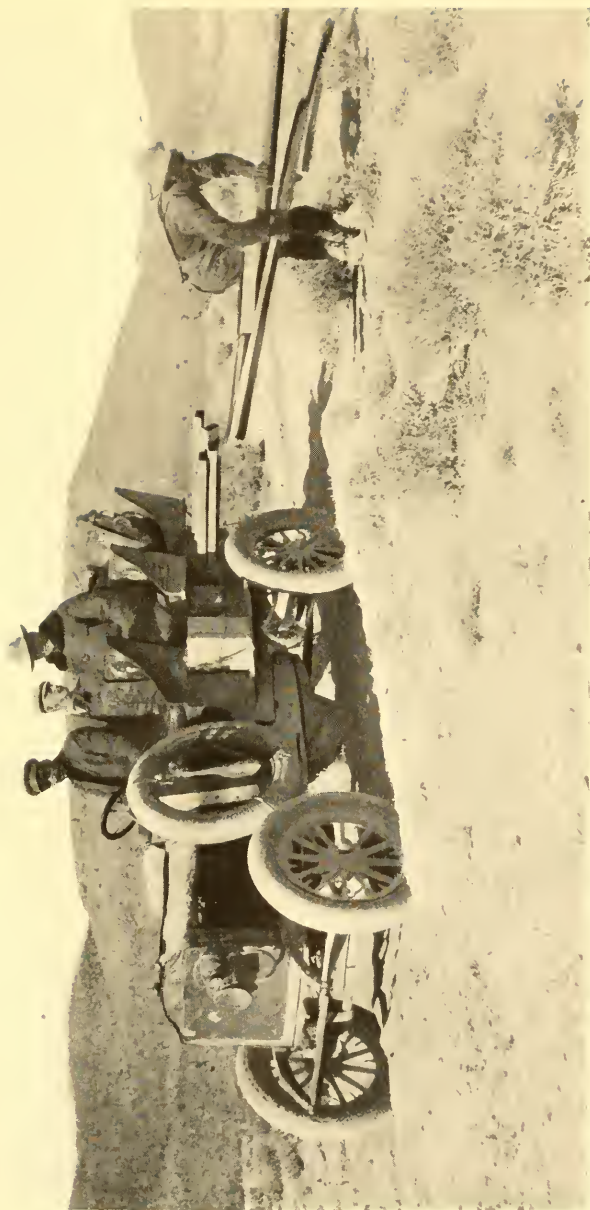
---

York club man stripped down to a prospector's outfit and set adrift in the desert to shift for himself, the car was made to look even less like an automobile. Water-kegs and cases of oil and gasoline were strapped on her sides, together with enough spare tires and parts to reconstruct her at short notice. With her engines uncovered, reeking of oil and dust, rusty and patched and gaunt, the machine seemed to belong to the desert after "Bill" Brown had fashioned her to his liking. And like his machine, the driver had come to harmonize with the environment. He had been in the employ of a New York physician before he came West to tame one of these desert steeds. It was a far cry from the uniformed and dapper chauffeur of the boulevard and the garage to the rugged, dusty, self-reliant fighter against odds that the desert had made of him in one year.

"I like it better than I did in New York," said Bill, with a smile that struggled through his mask of alkali. "I can't tell you why. I guess because this comes pretty near being a man's work."

Sometimes he made the run to Bullfrog in five hours. This was when the machine held together. He was seldom on the road longer than twelve hours, which was a better record than that of other drivers, who had been stranded for a day and a night in the blazing desolation between the two ports.

His road twisted through cañons, or lava-strewn plains, across the bottom of dead lakes, and through



*A chauffeur of the desert and his car*



---

## *On the Road to Bullfrog*

---

sand that buried his tires. The steering wheel was never still as he snaked his old machine through the rough going, while the passengers bounded merrily from their seats, and wondered while in air whether they would come down in or out of the car.

Twenty miles from anywhere we passed a tent which bore the legend, "Saloon and Restaurant." Another sign informed us that this tent was the town of "Cuprite" and that its reason for being was, "First shipment, \$238 per ton." The worth of very many tons would have been required to hold the average man more than five minutes in "Cuprite," but the population of four was cheerful and apparently contented. Far ahead a dust cloud marked the crawling progress of a freight outfit, hauling hay and lumber to Bullfrog, taking five days to make the sixty-mile journey.

Against the background of sand and mountains gleamed a little lake. It was framed in wet marsh and green undergrowth, and tall trees marched behind it. Presently the machine stormed over this patch of desert, and there was nothing but a streak of dazzling white soda and clumps of sagebrush. This dry lake whence the mirage had fled was as smooth and hard as asphalt, and for a mile Bill Brown "let her out," and it was like flying, after the pitching and bucking over the desert road.

"I made the trip by night during the summer," said he. "It was too hot in the daytime. Then

---

## *The Greater America*

---

you did get a run for your money, because I'd miss the road now and then and cavort over the rocks till I struck it again. But I've been lucky. I never had to walk forty miles for help and leave my passengers spraddled out in the sand like one of the drivers did, with the thermometer playing around a hundred and twenty."

The machine stopped with an ominous rattle. It seemed as if Bill Brown had boasted before he was out of the woods. He climbed down and looked his battle-scarred veteran over. A freighter was passing a few hundred yards away. To this outfit hastened the resourceful Bill and returned with a few feet of wire which he had purloined from a bale of hay. With unruffled temper Bill burrowed into the stifling dust, somehow utilized the wire to hitch his machine together again, and she bounded away with renewed and headlong enthusiasm.

Ten miles from the camp of Beatty, we essayed to jump across a gully at a gait of about thirty miles an hour. There was a crash and a spill, in which the passengers were dumped overside on their several heads. Bill Brown rolled out like a shot rabbit, and when he scrambled to his feet, surveyed a wrecked car. The rear axle had snapped in twain and one wheel had rolled on down the gully. A civilized driver with a broken axle would have thrown up his hands and waited to be towed into harbor. The passengers gazed mournfully across the desert and



---

## *On the Road to Bullfrog*

---

thought of the ten-mile walk. The time was the late afternoon, and the prospect was not pleasing. But Bill remarked with an air of a man who has no troubles:

"This don't amount to shucks. You just loaf around and pick wild flowers for half an hour and then we'll go on our way rejoicing."

He extracted a spare axle, a jack and a wrench from his machine shop under the seats, collected a few rocks of handy size and hummed a little song while he toiled. The rear of the car was jacked up on a stone underpinning, and the broken axle removed, and a new one fitted in thirty-five minutes by the watch.

"I was a little slower than usual," apologized Bill. "This gully is a mean place to break down in. You can't get under the machine without building up a rock pile first."

Again the old car buckled down to her task, and rattled into Beatty, six hours out from Goldfield. There was one long street of tents, and straggling away from them were tiny dwellings ingeniously walled with tin cracker boxes hammered out flat or with gunny sacks, or beer bottles set in adobe, and dugouts were burrowing into the hillsides. Beatty was five days by freight from a railroad and lumber was a staggering luxury.

Ringed about by painted mountains, whose towering slopes were wondrously streaked with crimson and

---

## *The Greater America*

---

green, the new camp seemed vastly more remote from the world of men than could be measured in miles of desert. The concentrated essence of American enterprise was displayed in a hotel which had been opened a few days before our arrival. It was a big square, wooden building of two stories, which stood forth in this town of tents and shacks like a battle ship amid a fishing fleet. And one had to fare to this far corner of the country to find that "welcome at an inn" which cities have forgotten. Waiting on the porch was Mrs. Casey, the landlord's wife, blowing a horn and cheerily calling:

"Dinner's hot and waiting. Come in to the best hotel in a hundred miles."

A piano was busy in the parlor, there were mission furniture and big lounging chairs in the office, and at the dining room door tarried, with smiling countenance, a plump and ruddy waiter with a white mustache, who was an animated evidence of good living.

It seems worth while to recall some of the items of that memorable menu down at Casey's, in the camp of Beatty, not far from the edge of Death Valley, amid as ghastly an isolation of natural background as can be found on the globe:

"Utah celery, sliced tomatoes and cucumbers, roast spring chicken, lettuce salad, corn on the cob, green apple pie, English plum pudding, apples and grapes, and fresh milk."

There were telephones in the bedrooms, bathtubs

---

## *On the Road to Bullfrog*

---

and running water, a plate-glass bar and two spick-and-span roulette wheels; in short, all the comforts of home and most of the luxuries.

In the starlit evening the untiring Bill Brown limbered up his scarred chariot and drove us over to Bullfrog, five miles away. The lamps went out during the journey, but Bill was not disturbed. He drove at top speed and occasionally lost the rocky trail. At such times the car careened on two wheels, came down with a grunt, and hurdled a few boulders. But with unshaken energy the machine boomed into Bullfrog, and by a miracle of luck the passengers were still inside.

At the hotel, which at that time was almost the only wooden building in Bullfrog, we chanced to meet a sharp-featured, boyish-looking young man, George Wingfield by name. Three years before this he had been a cow puncher, and tradition has it that he landed in Tonopah with assets of twenty-five dollars. Gambling "looked good to him" as offering an opening for a strong and willing young man who was intent on piling up a fortune with the least possible delay. Millions were being talked all around him and he wanted a few of them. His good luck was so extraordinary that in a few months he was able to buy out a controlling interest in the "Tonopah Club."

Then he was able to stake prospectors in the more fascinating gamble for gold claims. He sent these

---

## *The Greater America*

---

hardy pilgrims out to right and left, reckoning that a few "grub-stakes" and burros were worth risking even if only one man in twenty should find gold. Within the year young Wingfield had interests in several of the richest desert claims, and was speeding over the hot sands in the biggest, reddest automobile in all Nevada. Within three years from the time he had been punching cattle he was worth a million. Meanwhile United States Senator Nixon had become interested in this quiet, shrewd gambler, and took him into business partnership. Later, however, the Senator has urged young Wingfield to forego his proprietorship of the "Tonopah Club," as a feature of his business activities which might cause caustic comment in Washington touching the alliance.

It occurred to me while I was eating ham and eggs alongside this George Wingfield in the Bullfrog hotel that there was romance left even in money getting. Here was a modern buccaneer, if you please, who had dived with fortune, and won by means of daring and enterprise as bold as ever sent men to fight for gold that lay in the holds of tall galleons. He had "made his stake" as a gambler, but in this corner of the West your honest gambler is as respectable a figure as a Standard Oil king of the Atlantic seaboard. I found that young Wingfield was one of the most respected and popular men of the desert not because he is rich, but because he is square and fearless and generous. I heard not long ago that he has piled up



*A desert pass on the Goldfield road*



---

## *On the Road to Bullfrog*

---

such huge interests in mining operations that his income is about two hundred thousand dollars a year. He belongs with a modern generation of "Bonanza Kings" whose beginnings are no more bizarre and rude and lawless than those of earlier argonauts whose descendants squander the wealth of the Comstock lode.

Inasmuch as a man would have to pack water on his back to camp on this site, the town of Bullfrog was named by a man of high-powered fancy. The camp had another distinction in that it was the last outpost of the gold seeker. To push on toward the south meant a journey of a hundred and twenty-five miles to reach the nearest railroad, within sight of the Funeral Range, whose ramparts march along Death Valley.

Bullfrog was somewhat in the condition of a man with a thousand-dollar bank note in his pocket who is likely to go hungry before he can break it. The rush was over, and the hills were speckled with claims and the ore was there. The hundreds who tarried to hold down their locations and wait for something to turn up lacked capital to take out the ore; and when they had it on the dump, they were so far from a railroad that hauling it over the desert cut too heavily into the profits. Therefore they sat tight and held on, waiting for the railroad which must come to them in a few months. Meantime there was much gold in the hills and little cash in the camp.



---

## *The Greater America*

---

But hopes were high, and it was good to see the rows of tents that stood for pluck and courage, on the firing line of civilization.

Next day I was invited to lunch at one of the show mines of this district. Bob Montgomery was one of the tribe of desert prospectors when he stumbled upon this bonanza. When I saw it the miners had been crosscutting and tunneling into the white and chalk-like rock only a few months. They had piled up several thousands of tons of ore that was worth from \$200 to \$700 a ton. It was crumbly stuff that looked like lime, and it held no free gold that the eye could see. It was costing fifty dollars a ton to freight it to a smelter, but it paid to ship such ore as this out of the remote desert. Inside the mine, a huge mass of ore had been blocked out which assayed from \$230 to \$1,500 a ton. The experts estimated that three million dollars' worth of ore was already in sight. Taking it out was the cleanest and easiest mining imaginable. The soft, clean talc cut almost like cheese, and it was like removing sacks of gold from a vault. After a glimpse of such treasure finding as this, it was possible to understand the exuberant declaration of a wild-eyed young citizen of Bullfrog:

"Give us time enough and we'll demonetize gold."

The story of one such strike as this lures thousands into the desert, and they paint another and a contrasting picture. For many are called and few are



---

## *On the Road to Bullfrog*

---

chosen by the fickle fortune that directs the trail of the gold hunter. Where these thousands of adventurous men of broken fortunes come from, and where they drift to when the stampede has passed, is one of the mysteries of the "gold strike." They leave behind them, however, cities where there was a desert, they help to redeem the waste places and in their wake is new wealth that flows into every artery of the nation's material welfare.

Twenty thousand people have been already added to the population of Nevada, and many millions in money to her resources. And the hero and the creator of it all is the dusty prospector with his hardy burros, his canteen, his blankets and his gold pan and hammer. Behind him comes the army of careless and high-hearted invaders, whose truly American war cry is:

"If it looks good to you, get to it."

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE MEN OF THE UNTAMED DESERT

IT was in the camp of Bullfrog that Mitchell, the big, brick-red mining man of Nevada, told me his view of law on the desert:

"If you are prospecting with an unreasonable hog of a partner, who wants to eat three slices of bacon and half a loaf of bread for breakfast, and lets the canteen gurgle down his throat, while you get along with a strip of bacon and just moisten your lips when you take a drink, then you're all right if you kill him. I'd kill him if there wasn't anything else to do. It's a tough game, and it's your life or his when you're lost or your grub-stake and water are giving out."

These observations were suggested by the arrival in camp two days before of the bones of a prospector who had died of thirst some forty miles from Bullfrog during the previous summer. He had been a carpenter, earning wages of eight dollars a day in the new camps during the "boom," but the gold fever led him away from this safe and profitable toil. He picked up a partner, they loaded their burros and trailed off south toward the Death Valley country to prospect in the Funeral Range.

Three weeks after the desert swallowed them up the partner wandered into a freighters' camp,

---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

half-crazed with thirst and exhaustion. He was able to tell the freighters that the carpenter was somewhere out beyond, lost and without water, too helpless to move. The partner was too weak and fevered to go back with the rescue party of freighters, so they left him in camp. He directed them as well as he could, but the search was bootless, and Griffin, the carpenter of Bullfrog, was added to the long list of desert victims. Several months later a party of prospectors stumbled, by chance, across what was left of him. There were no traces of his outfit; he had thrown away his gun, his canteen and his hat. One shoe was found thirty feet from his body, and he had torn off and flung away most of his clothing. These were the ghastly evidences of the last great fight he had made to struggle on.

“When they’re dying for water,” said Mitchell, who knew the “desert game,” “they throw away everything until all their clothes are gone, and you generally find them without a stitch on.”

To those who have not been in the Nevada desert it seems almost incredible that men should wander there and die, a dozen or more every summer, and that others will follow them and die of thirst in there so long as there are inaccessible mountains to be searched for gold. Nor is it always the heedless prospector that loses his life by daring the desert. I heard many of these stories while crossing this stretch of country, and passed more than one little heap of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

lava fragments that marked the grave of a victim of thirst, but that which made the most haunting impression ran as follows:

A prosperous mining man of Delamar, Nevada, started to drive from his home to Pioche, an old silver-mining camp which was a large and tumultuous city thirty years ago. Pioche lay across an expanse of desert, but the driver had made the trip many times and had no more thought of danger than if he were taking a train for San Francisco. He had a good pair of horses and a buckboard in which he stowed a full canteen, food and a keg of water for his horses. With good luck he expected to cover the distance between daylight and dark, and to return home next day. It was hardly worth saying good-by to his family.

Somewhere out in the sand and sagebrush he got out of his buckboard, for what purpose no one knows. It may have been to adjust the harness, or to kill a rattlesnake with his whip. By an almost incredible twist of fate it happened that he would have been a luckier man to jump from the deck of a liner into mid-ocean. His horses took fright and ran away and left him. They wandered into Delamar on the day after, and the empty buckboard told the town that disaster had overtaken the driver.

A party was hastily equipped and the wheel tracks were followed until dark. Then a dry camp was made and the search was picked up on the following



*Morning-day in the desert*



---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

day. When they found the man only three days had elapsed since he left home. He was naked and stark mad. He became conscious for a little while, long enough to tell how the tragedy had happened, and he died soon after they carried him home, of thirst, fever and a shattered mind.

"Why didn't he follow his wagon tracks back home?" said the man from Delamar who was reminded to tell the story. "It's most likely that he did try for a little way, and then he went off his head, just scared crazy at the bare thought of being lost on foot out there with no water in thirty or forty miles, and he figured that he could never make the distance, and that made him locoed. Or maybe he thought he saw a spring and lost the trail and couldn't find it again. The desert plays queer tricks with a man's thinkin' outfit."

When I was in Bullfrog in the autumn of 1905 a stage line had been recently put across a stretch of a hundred and twenty-five miles of this desert to connect the new gold camps with the railroad which runs from Los Angeles to Salt Lake. It was a hardy and venturesome enterprise, backed by the Kimball Brothers, two young men of the stuff that men are made of in the new West. They came naturally by their liking for the stage business, for their father had been one of the partners in the Overland Mail when Ben Holliday was making a new highway across the continent.

To set this desert enterprise going they had to

---

## *The Greater America*

---

establish supply and water stations, for in the route of a hundred and twenty-five miles there were only two springs, and not a human being except for the lonely ranchers that dwelt in these two little oases. Three wells were driven, so that water stations were about thirty miles apart, and by these wells were pitched the tents of the station-keepers who fed and watered the change horses.

There was no way traffic, and the revenues must come from the daily mail contract and the few passengers who went through to the gold camps or came out to the railroad at twenty-five dollars a head. Whether or not the young men gained profit by the enterprise, they were sure of the distinction of operating the loneliest and most forbidding stage route in the United States.

When I decided to come out of Bullfrog by this route my acquaintances agreed that the idea was wholly asinine.

"Go back to Goldfield in an automobile and take a train for Reno," they chorused. "That stage trip to Las Vegas is the worst ever. Those who have lived through it swear they'll die here of old age before they'll try to escape the way they came in. It's the limit."

The project sounded so uncommonly forbidding that it seemed well worth undertaking. Surely the kind of men who drove and supplied the stage line, as well as the wayfarers to be met along the route,



---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

were helping to build up the unpeopled places after their own solitary fashion, and they would be far more worth knowing than the commonplace traveling acquaintances one is wont to make in the beaten ruts of railway journeying.

The stage halted to pick me up at the Beatty hotel in the Bullfrog district at five o'clock in the morning. The starlit night was yet chill with the windless and crystalline air that refreshes the desert when the sun has left it. A covered Concord wagon pulled by two horses came slowly up the tented street that was ankle deep in white alkali dust.

Here and there a canvas wall glimmered from an early candlelight within. The little camp, cuddled in the rugged arms of the mountains that locked it round about, seemed very lonely and almost forlorn, so far it was from the more permanent habitations of men and women, so brave an outpost of a civilization that has almost outgrown this kind of pioneering. It needed the talk and stir of its rough-clad, sun-burned men in the raw, new streets, and the noise of pick and blast in the prospect holes that burrowed the slopes, to detach it from the lifeless silence that brooded over the desert.

There were no other passengers for the stage, and the driver welcomed me like a long-lost brother, for he did not like to drive his thirty-mile stretch alone. We passed out through a gap in the mountains and they were just beginning to flush with the singular

---

## *The Greater America*

---

glory of the desert dawn. In the wake of a shrouding haze of blue, which lingered briefly, came a crimson flush that touched first the crests of the mountains, then stole swiftly down their sides, and the day leaped into being.

While it was yet early morning we passed through a tiny camp called Gold Center. Gold had not been found there, and it was the center of nothing except sand and mountains. It was, in a way, left stranded in the ebb of the roaring tide of the first rush a few months before, when the vanguard of the invaders took it hilariously for granted that gold must be everywhere in these mountains.

The more rational settlements of Beatty and Bullfrog lay only a few miles away, yet Gold Center persisted in being, and, *mirabile dictu*, misguided initiative was erecting a brewery in the camp, which was as far removed from malt and hops as it was possible to find this side of Hades. We stopped to pick up a passenger who was waiting at the canvas saloon, fittingly named "The Last Chance." The driver, in an ill-timed spirit of jest, observed to the shaggy landlord:

"How are things in Dead Center?"

"Dead Center! h—l!" indignantly snorted the leading citizen. "For two cents I'd pull you off that broken-down hearse and spill you all over Gold Center, which is booked to be the best camp in the State of Nevada. Busted prospectors that have to drive

---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

stage to get a grub-stake mustn't come round here passing any gay remarks about 'Dead Center.' "

The passenger was tactful enough to add no fuel to this blaze as he clambered into the wagon and shook the dust of Gold Center from his battered boots. He slumped into the collar of his faded overcoat beside the driver, and pulled down over his eyes a dilapidated soft hat, which in itself was eloquent of many things suffered in desert wandering.

He was a chunky, elderly man, with a blue eye, a flaming ruddiness of countenance and a thatch of tow hair which defied the onslaught of years to turn it gray. Ever and anon this Bill Crump extracted a bottle from his pocket, offered it to the driver, who always refused with a melancholy gesture, and drank therefrom a "slug to keep the chill off," with a deftness which gave weight to his claim that he was a son of old Kentucky. They were an oddly contrasting pair, the stout and garrulous Crump and the driver, who was a lanky man with a subdued and even chastened air, as if life were bound to be a losing fight.

Yet they were kindred spirits, in that both had been rolling stones along the outer edge of civilization, and old age was overtaking them with naught to show for the long years except an amazing variety of experiences.

Crump faced the future stoutly with a flamboyant courage, and you could picture in your mind's eye

---

## *The Greater America*

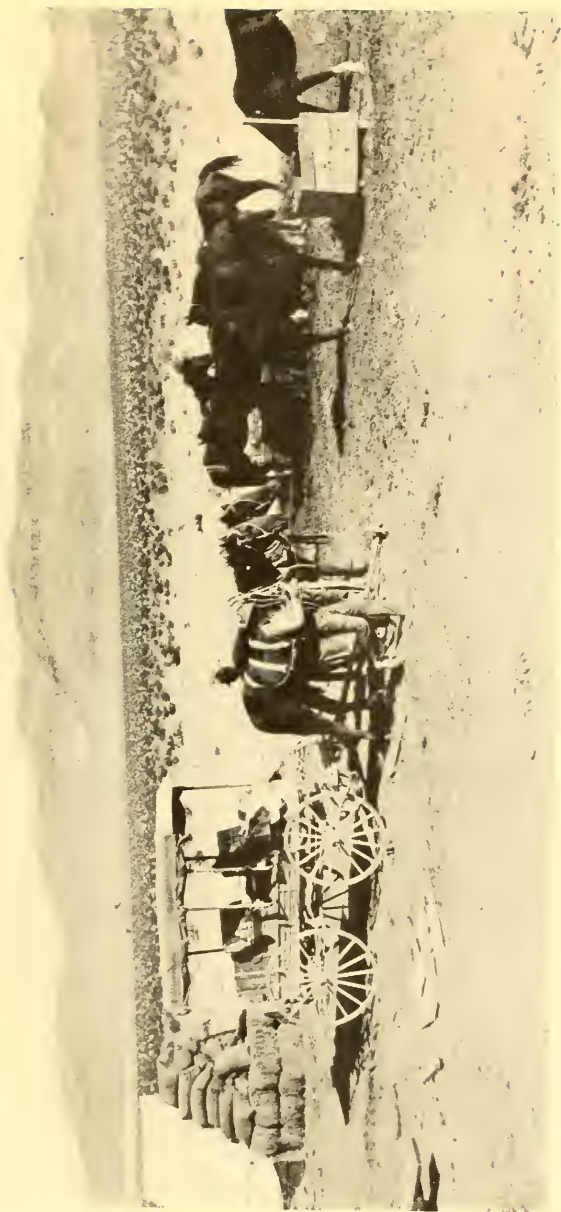
---

this battered, sturdy figure shaking his fist at fortune in city and camp and desert, always making the best of it and letting the morrow go hang.

As for the stage driver, he was and would be a dreamer to the end, industrious, sober, but never making a winning fight against the realities, moving on with an air of resignation to find the vision still beyond his grasp. Crump had just quit a government surveying party, with which he had been horse-wrangler for four months. The expedition was moving into Death Valley, to make the first map of that unpleasant region, and Crump decided that he needed change of occupation.

"I'm going to spend the winter in Los Angeles," he explained, with his enduring bravado. "I need rest and change. I'm a furniture-maker by trade. My chest of tools is in hock, but I'll get it out and make money and mix up with good people."

His versatility had included many years of driving stage. Indeed, he could rake up memories of stage routes in Texas forty years ago, but heaven only knows how many things Crump had turned his hand to in the meantime. The driver had been fairly consistent as a miner "on and off" for twenty-five years. Last year he prospected in the desert for nine months and found nothing. Now he was full of a scheme to return to Alaska and outfit a party to trap for furs and incidentally look for gold. There was no chance of failure, he argued, and whoever should be bold



*The stage station "thirty miles from nowhere"*



---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

enough to grub-stake him would inevitably reap a dazzling reward.

He was driving stage only until he could turn miner again. He had seen the partners of his youth make great strikes and become the millionaires of Utah and Colorado. His own failures had not soured him. He was inclined to believe that every man got a square deal sooner or later, and his turn was coming, of course it was. Crump was not looking an inch beyond his florid nose, even when he talked so large about his plans for the winter, while the driver was continually dwelling with the visions that were as impalpable as the desert mirages.

When the sun swiftly climbed clear of the curtain-ing mountains the desert began to swim in a glare of heat. To the right ran the naked heights of the Charleston mountains, while a few miles to the left was the grim Funeral Range, beyond which lay Death Valley. Between these towering ranges stretched the desert, over which the stage crawled like a fly on a whitewashed floor. Through a notch in the Funeral Range we could see across Death Valley to the mountains which lifted high on the other side of it. There was something inexpressibly forbidding and mysterious about this view-point in the desert.

For Death Valley has been for long a fabled place, in which have been focused many strange and dreadful stories, some of them true. It is one of the hottest corners on the globe, because, while Bullfrog, only

---

## *The Greater America*

---

thirty miles from the head of it, is four thousand feet above the sea, this narrow valley between two mountain ranges drops to a depth below sea level. Therefore it becomes a furnace in which no air is stirring. It is perilous to life because good water can be found in only two or three places in a length of more than a hundred miles, while there are many poison springs, fatal to man and beast.

It is bad enough, in truth, without need of exaggerated pen pictures such as the western correspondent loves to paint. If any disaster to outfit occurs, if the canteen runs dry, if a man should fall and break a leg while prospecting in the valley, he were wise to blow out his brains to avoid lingering in slow torture. A veteran prospector who had crossed Death Valley three times, and was known among his fellows as a man of unsurpassed physique, hardihood and experience, told me what he thought of the journey while we were in camp together in the desert:

“It’s plumb foolishness to go into Death Valley with less than three or four men in your party, and twelve to fifteen burros. Load four or five burros with hay and barley for their own feed, three or four with canned stuff, flour and bacon, and at least four with water, and if you don’t get lost you will pull through all right. There’s gold in there, though I don’t take any stock in Scotty and his mysterious mine. He’s a four-flusher. There’s prospectors



---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

ransacking the Death Valley country all the time, and you can't hide a rich mine in this country any more than you can hide a brick building in a town."

You cannot cross the Nevada desert without hearing much gossip about "Scotty," he of the meteoric special trains and the colossal bluffs. A "busted cow puncher" with an exotic imagination, he has juggled fact and fancy until the shrewdest men in the Southwest lock horns in argument as to whether "Scotty" has a mine in Death Valley or dreamed it. When I met him he was coming out of the desert with a bag of ore on a burro and the announcement:

"I'm due to take a little whirl down the road. I'm going to bluff old Harriman out of his boots. I'll bet him fifty thousand dollars I can beat him in a race from the Coast to Chicago, me taking a special on the Santa Fé and that old figger-head pulling out on the Union Pacific. I'm afraid he'll take water. He's a counterfeit, on the level, he is.

"They say I've killed fifteen men just to see 'em kick," continued "Scotty," as he cocked his hat over one eye. "It ain't so. I wouldn't do no such thing. They don't know me. I fool 'em all. I've got a pair of glasses that can see fifty miles, and a gun that shoots five miles, and when they try to trail me into the Valley I run blazers on 'em. I'm due for a little race down the pike behind an engine. Maybe I've got a mine and maybe not. Maybe it's on Furnace Creek, in the Funeral Range, Death Valley, and

---

## *The Greater America*

---

maybe it's somewhere else, and maybe I ain't got a cent."

A bizarre figure of a man who harmonizes immensely well with the romantic mystery of Death Valley, "Scotty" has managed to find and somehow maintain the notoriety that is dear to his soul. To my knowledge he "blew in" on his "whirl" some six or eight thousand dollars advanced under a grubstake contract by a hypnotized New York banker, which funds were to be used in developing the alleged mining properties. "Scotty" refused to tell his backer where the mine was, and squandered all the money advanced, which accounts for a good part of his flaming prosperity. As a type of the vanishing West, he makes a crudely picturesque figure against the dull background of a tamed civilization.

While the stage toiled through the sand and the choking dust clouds at the depressing speed of three miles an hour, there moved in the far distance another pillar of alkali powder, heralding the approach of a freight outfit. By and by there emerged from this gray veil the long string of eighteen mules, stepping out with brave and patient endurance, pulling the linked trail wagons no more than ten or twelve miles in a day. The "mule skinner" in the saddle of a wheeler and the "swamper" trudging alongside exchanged quiet greeting with the stage driver from the enveloping fog:

"How are you?"



*The desert freighter ten days out from port*



---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

“ All right ; how are you ? ”

“ Pretty good.”

The passing was like that of two ships at sea. The freighters were ten days out from Las Vegas. One trail wagon was loaded with hay and water kegs, for they must make dry camps between wells, and they moved over the face of the desert with a lonely deliberation that made an impression of large and patient self-reliance. Scarcely anywhere in America could they be found outside of the desert. Nor would they linger much longer even here, for the railroad was creeping along their trail and soon they would be of a piece with the other relics of the genuinely “ simple life ” which has made a nation of a wilderness.

At noon we stopped at a tent where there was a driven well. The keeper of the station lived here with his wife, and there were no other dwellers within thirty miles of them. Nothing grew around them but the sagebrush, nothing else could be made to grow without water. There was not a tree within a day's journey. But this cheerful, kindly, gray-haired man and his motherly wife said that they liked the desert. Perhaps it was because their faces hinted that home and contentment are where the heart is. A stage each way within the twenty-four hours, the occasional freight outfit or prospector that tarried for water—these were their only visitors. There were no neighbors.

---

## *The Greater America*

---

The heat beat down on their shadeless tents as from a furnace, and the uneasy dust was always sifting into food and clothing and blankets. But their contentment in each other and the inscrutable fascination of the desert had turned the edge of their hardships.

A change of drivers was made, and a white-bearded patriarch turned back with us to drive over the same forty miles he had just covered northward bound.

"When you get home," he chuckled as he picked up the reins, "tell 'em you rode one stage with old Pop Gilbert, that crossed the plains with his dad 'way back in Fifty. We set out with ox teams to go from Illinois to California and we were six months on the way. Dad didn't like it out there, and being a sudden man he turned round and trailed back to Illinois. I'm still pretty chipper."

He *was* a "chipper" veteran of the frontier, for after a conversation with the invincible Crump and a pull at the black bottle, he became interested in the government survey lately forsaken by this passenger and asked:

"S'pose there's a chance for me to get that job you throwed up? I like hosses, and Death Valley's one place where I hain't been. I don't mind hot weather. I'm 'a desert lizard, and my hide's turned to leather."

Crump was discouraging, but "Pop" prattled for some time about missing this chance to be baked alive

---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

in Death Valley. It seemed absurd that danger should menace along a trail rutted by the wheel tracks of the stage, but in mid-afternoon we came up with an unexpected suggestion of the implacable hostility of these waste places. The stage had covered perhaps twenty miles from the noon-time camp, and the next station lay about the same distance beyond. A solitary man was staggering on ahead, reeling from one side of the trail to the other, frequently halting to throw himself flat on the sand and then more weakly scrambling on. Far in advance, mere dots on the horizon, were three other figures on foot.

Presently the voice of the derelict floated back in incoherent cries. He was so absorbed in trying to overtake those far ahead of him that he paid no heed to the stage until it was beside him. Then he fell on his knees with wild gestures and husky pleadings in Spanish. It seemed that the vanishing dots beyond were companions with whom he had set out to walk from the Bullfrog camps to the railroad. They had only two canteens among them, and since leaving the last well their water had given out, and his strength had been the first to break.

They had pushed on in desperation, leaving him to fall by the wayside, and as Crump expressed it, "the Greaser was all in." The pitiable wretch was given a lift in the stage, and a pull at the driver's big canteen. When his callous comrades were overtaken they were fluently cursed by old man Crump in vivid

---

## *The Greater America*

---

Spanish, and their canteens were filled for them, after which the abandoned one was dumped among them to shift for himself.

Of a different metal was the old prospector met a little while later. He was really an amazing figure of a man. Bent and partly crippled with rheumatism, he was trudging along alone, with no burros, and not even a blanket on his back. He had not a cent in his pocket, and his outfit consisted of a canteen and a paper parcel of bacon and biscuit given him by a generous freighter. While we stopped to breathe the horses in the sand, which made walking like pulling through a heavy snow, the old man made cheerful chat with us. He had been working a claim in the Funeral Range through the summer, and his grub-stake having run out, he was footing it into the mining camps to look for work to tide him over the winter. He pulled a few chunks of rock from his pockets, gazed at them with an expression of the most radiant confidence, and said that on the strength of these samples he proposed to save enough money from his wages to outfit in the spring and return to his mountain solitude. Here was a man for you, who preached a concrete gospel of faith, hope and works.

In the early evening we toiled through a cañon or "wash," and found a tent inhabited by a youth in charge of a "dry camp." He was somewhat peevish as he protested:

"I've watered your fresh team of horses, but



---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

they drunk every drop I had, and there ain't enough left to make a pot of coffee. What am I going to do? If you don't send me back a barrel from Indian Spring in the morning, I'm up against it hard. I ain't a kicker, but likewise I ain't a lizard to live without water."

Now the stage crept along over a rolling country in which the darkness conjured many delusions and fantasies. We always seemed to be climbing the white trail that streaked the night, even when the desert was tilting downward. One could see, or thought he saw, houses, railroad grades, even trains of cars. These were only the shadowed shapes of bleak buttes and uncouth fragments of landscape that had been gashed by cloud-bursts tearing down from the distant mountain sides. The "Joshua trees," distorted caricatures of verdure, became clothed with an uncanny vagueness of aspect. Their twisted, spiked limbs took on the shapes of men who were crawling over the sand, or crouching in wait, or gesturing either in threat or appeal. All sense of proportion had vanished with the daylight. One's eyes were no longer to be relied upon. A low-hung star, barely veiled behind the ragged crest of a mountain "wash," cast an upward reflection which so well mimicked the glow of a distant camp fire that a lost tenderfoot would have struggled toward it, believing help was near.

Long after midnight we came to whispering trees around a spring, the first oasis in twenty hours of

---

## *The Greater America*

---

travel from Bullfrog, and as grateful a resting place as ever the school-day geographies pictured of a palm-fringed well in the Sahara. Water had done a miracle here, and when we pushed on at daylight after a few hours' sleep in a tent, green fields and pastured cattle were glimpsed, and the growing crops that sweetly contrasted with the desolation round about. The rancher who made breakfast for the stage crew had lived in this place for many years, and by choice, for he said in parting:

"I went back to my old home in Vermont last year, and I didn't hanker to stay there. This place looked good to me when I drove in again."

Almost all that day the road led across the desert, until in the waning afternoon we were within sight of the town of Las Vegas, which had come suddenly into being when the new railroad to Salt Lake marched through this region. At one end of the new town, in a grove of splendid trees, are the adobe walls of a ranch and fort built by the Mormon pioneers when they pushed through Utah to Lower California in 1851. We had crossed their old trail on the previous day, and the road they made is still used to pass through the Meadow Valley Wash, where a party of scores of men, women and children perished together in that first heroic pilgrimage. A stone marks the place where their bones were found.

Over this route they pushed southward until they came to Las Vegas, and, wonder of wonders, found a

---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

spring that gushed from the thirsty plain like a young river. Here they camped and rested and refitted before the caravan moved along its four months' journey to the San Bernardino Valley. The new railroad, built by Senator Clark, follows through Nevada and Utah that old Mormon trail for much of its length. Nor are the crumbling adobe walls of the old ranch at Las Vegas the only relics of that other age in the building of the West. When the grading camps of the railroad were moving up through the desert, they found the bleached bones of many of those pioneers, and buried them beside the track. I met an old man who crossed the desert even before the gold rush of Forty-nine, and who saw the Mormon vanguard on its march to Utah.

"There were six hundred wagons," said he, "moving in a trail of six abreast, and we saw the dust which they made for two days before we overtook them."

The Mormons proved that water could make a garden of this desert area, and now, half a century later, Nevada, in the wake of Utah, is beginning to feel the stimulus of an irrigation movement which is certain to make for her greater wealth and population than all the gold and silver that have been found in her mountains.

Said President Roosevelt at Reno three years ago:

"And now here in Nevada a new future opens to you because of the energy, the foresight and the far-sighted intelligence of those who have recognized the

---

## *The Greater America*

---

absolute need of using for the tillage of your fields the waters that run to waste in your rivers. It would be difficult to find in the United States a locality better fitted to serve as an object lesson in the need of irrigation and the use of it."

The men who have been the scouts in the invasion of the desert, the hardy, patient pioneers of the gold camps, the prospecting outfits, the freight wagons and the stage lines, bulk big among the builders of this part of the West. Behind them, however, there will flock a population which will make its permanent settlement even in such a hopeless-looking desert as I have tried briefly to picture.

The irrigation work of the national government has made its first great conquest in this same Nevada. Into this parched sand and sagebrush the water was turned last year from the works of the "Carson and Truckee Project." It was the most important event in the history of the State, of more lasting value even than the discovery of the Comstock lode. From the massive masonry dam, constructed to hold the waters of the Truckee River, the blessed flow was turned over fifty thousand acres.

This was the first completed section of a plan which is to irrigate almost a million acres of desert. This means, within a few years, fifty-acre farms for twenty thousand families, on which they are certain of large and profitable crops. It means also new towns and cities to supply this great farming community with



*Freighters watering at an oasis*



---

## *The Men of the Untamed Desert*

---

the products of the mills and mines and factories of the country, east and west.

More than that, it means a new population of perhaps two hundred thousand souls and a prosperous principality added to the greatness of the Union. It is all purely creative, for wealth is made where there was none before, and magnificent opportunity offered for independent and self-reliant livelihood to those who seek it.

When one has seen the desert at close range, and then views the great beginnings of its redemption by means of water, he becomes impressed with the fact that there are two sides to the "Mormon question." Their wagon trains marked the path for the first survey of the first transcontinental railroad. And they pushed on into and claimed for their own a territory so forbidding that other pioneers shunned it as they would the shadow of death. Before the sun had set on the second day of the Mormon camp in the Salt Lake valley work had begun on the first irrigation ditch ever constructed by Anglo-Saxon hands.

The teeming mining camp may pass. Nevada is a graveyard of dead camps. In the seventies Virginia, Pioche, Belmont, Jefferson, Ely, flaunted what they believed was inexhaustible mineral wealth. Their streets roared with life and activity, their hills echoed to the thunder of stamp mills and hoisting engines. Their shacks hold a hundred people where once thousands toiled and planned and hoped. Their

---

## *The Greater America*

---

smelters, furnaces and tall chimneys are rusted and forlorn. But the water that is being turned into the desert brings with it an enduring prosperity that will eclipse all the present-day gold bearing of Tonopah and Bullfrog.



## CHAPTER XXII

### IN CONCLUSION

"THE BOOSTER" is the most characteristic and stimulating figure in that vast territory that runs westward from the Great Lakes. He is banging his cymbals in Duluth and St. Paul and Minneapolis, from Spokane to Seattle, in Tacoma and Portland. His clarion note rings shrill down the Pacific Coast to Los Angeles and beyond. He is shouting the praises of his country and community in Salt Lake and Denver, and Texas has awakened to hearken to the din that he makes in Dallas and Galveston. Nor are his efforts confined to the cities that are clamoring for population and capital. Whether it be a tiny colony of pioneers tucked away in a remote valley of the Columbia, or a settlement of fruit growers in a far corner of California, Promotion Committees, Commercial Clubs, Boards of Trade and "Boosters" unattached are lying awake nights to map out campaign literature and devise new stratagems for making their "garden spot" known to the world at large.

This is the spirit of the newer West, a spirit of close-knit community interest in which the individual works for the good of all; as far as the poles apart from that curious selfishness and isolation in which many a dweller in Manhattan so envelops himself

---

## *The Greater America*

---

that he does not pretend to a bowing acquaintance with his next-door neighbor. It is a fresh and buoyant spirit, like that of vigorous youth, and can be no more vividly expressed than in the hymn of a prairie songster which runs like this:

“ Fall in with the big procession,  
Ketch the step and move along  
With the army of progression—  
That’s the place where you belong.  
Rise your voice and jine the chorus;  
Swing your hat and shout hooray.  
If your back’s weak put a porous  
Plaster on your vertebræ.  
Crawl from under public scorn  
*Drop the hammer! Grab a horn!*”

Or again this typical spirit strikes the top note in the lusty exhortations scattered broadcast by a Western Board of Trade:

### **BOOST**

Every citizen of Salt Lake City should be an **Advance Agent** of his town. Tell the people you meet what we have, what we need, and what we are capable of doing.

**Don’t Knock. Just Boost.**

If you own only a cottage in Salt Lake City—you are deeply interested—just as deeply as the man or corporations owning millions in factories or realty.

**Boost all the time. Every good word helps.**

**Boost to-day.**

**Boost to-morrow.**

---

## *In Conclusion*

---

Some of these cities have evolved their own peculiar slogans of progress to rally their citizens, as soldiers of the olden times followed the war cry of their clan or leader. In the Northwest you hear, "What can I do for Spokane?" or "Portland Leads the Way," or "Watch Tacoma Grow," and these legends bombard you on every hand until you realize that a different kind of a spirit is in these people from their more conservative cousins of the Atlantic seaboard.

The journalistic "muck raker" is an eastern product, and his activities have been chiefly confined to eastern soil. He takes himself with that immense seriousness characteristic of the mental attitude of the New Yorker who is inclined to believe that the welfare of the nation hangs upon the condition of his liver and such other peculiarly local influences as tend to color his national view-point. So far as the stirring and lusty West is concerned, Manhattan Island, over which several million fussy human beings scamper to and fro like ants in an overcrowded hill, might be scuttled and sunk in the Atlantic without impairing the stability of the United States.

The West, which is to be more and more the backbone and vitals of America in this twentieth century, has no time for holding post-mortems over itself. It has an abiding sense of humor along with its tremendous faith in itself and its destiny. When a beardless young man not long out of college sighs hopelessly and after a swift

---

## *The Greater America*

---

bird's-eye view of the past, present and future sits down to write a lugubrious series of articles called "American Rotten to the Core and I Am the First to Discover It," the West does not put up its shutters and go out of business. It perceives that the young man will know better when he is somewhat older and that plenty of hardy, outdoor exercise is what he most needs at present.

If your typical Western publicist of brains and backbone concludes that a bit of "muck raking" is needed in his home garden he goes about it after the fashion of William Allen White, who began the editorial that was heard around the world with this arraignment:

### "WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH KANSAS?"

"We all know, yet here we are at it again. We have an old moss-back Jacksonian who snorts and howls because there is a bath tub in the State House. We are running that old jay for Governor. We have another shabby, wild-eyed, rattle-brained fanatic who has said openly in a dozen speeches that the rights of the user are paramount to the rights of the owner. We are running him for Chief Justice so that capital will come tumbling over itself to get into the State. We have raked the old ash-heap of failure in the State and found an old human hoop skirt who has failed as a business man, who has failed as an editor, who has failed as a preacher, and we are going to run



*Prospectors in the heart of the hostile desert*



---

## *In Conclusion*

---

him for Congressman-at-large. He will help the looks of the Kansas delegation at Washington. Then we have discovered a kid without a law practice and have decided to run him for Attorney-General. Then for fear some hint that the State had become respectable might percolate through the civilized portion of our nation, we have decided to send three or four harpies out lecturing, telling the people that Kansas is raising hell and letting the corn go to weeds."

Kansas discovered what was "the matter with her," and to-day her people raise four hundred million dollars' worth of farm products and live stock in a year, nearly three hundred dollars' worth for every man, woman and child within her borders. She has ceased to preach the gospel of discontent because she is too busy living and teaching the rest of the country that its chief asset is in the soil, as it was in the days of our fathers.

Between 1896 and 1904 the increase in bank deposits in Kansas was two hundred and nineteen per cent., as compared with an increase for the whole United States of but ninety-one per cent. Iowa made even a more remarkable showing, for its savings banks in the same period swelled their roll of depositors two hundred and nine per cent., while the United States as a whole recorded an increase of only thirty-six per cent. W. S. Harwood has written in his book called "The New Earth," one paragraph which focuses the view-point of this vast and pre-eminently farming empire of the West:

---

## *The Greater America*

---

"Time was, and not so very long since, either, when the most feared, because the most powerful friend or foe the farmer had, was Wall Street. To-day the great body of the West, essentially a farming body, has become absolutely independent of this powerful factor. Now and then a farmer, grown rich in his new estate, contracts the fever of speculation, and is cured or killed by the medicine which Wall Street so adroitly administers, but the mass of the western producers, recognizing legitimate uses of capital as never before, freed from the want and cant of demagogues whose only capital is hatred of capital, have come to see that their occupation is a business in itself as much as any other; indeed far more than this, that they maintain a great manufacturing plant, the most colossal in existence, turning out the raw materials for the preservation of life itself. They have come to realize that they are the independent factors; the millions that must be fed, the dependents."

But the eastern view is still colored somewhat by the Wall Street doctrine, which holds that the foundations of this mighty nation are shaken when the schemes of a few money jugglers miss fire, or a few politicians are discovered to be unfit for the offices to which they were elected.

The foregoing impressions in conclusion were gleaned from the notebooks of the tenderfoot who has written these chapters after a journey which discovered for him certain regions of the newer America



---

## *In Conclusion*

---

in which there are big and fine and hopeful lessons to be read for the seeking. He has had to leave untouched, for lack of space, the marvelous development of the Southwest and the new South. Statistics could be mobilized by regiments and brigades to show that such material expansion and prosperity as the world has never known are making empire in all those other States where there is still opportunity for men to carve their own futures by the power of their brawn and brains, notwithstanding the dismal yawp of the "muck raker" and the calamity howler.

Nor is the future of the United States befogged with doubts and fears so long as the spirit of its people can still be voiced in two brief texts. They were worth the cost of this journey, and they are vitally and essentially American, now as in the older days.

The one is:

*"If It Looks Good to You, Get to It."*

And the other is:

*"Drop the Hammer; Grab a Horn."*

THE END





Two other notable  
books by  
Ralph D. Paine



## THE PRAYING SKIPPER

*Stories of life and action which grip and hold the attention until the last page is turned*

LOUISVILLE COURIER-JOURNAL—Possess a perfection of form and treatment combined with a knowledge of inner human nature that is only occasionally met with in literature.

PORTLAND DAILY PRESS—Delighted with the entire contents of the volume.

WORLD TO-DAY, CHICAGO—Any man that can write stories which a reviewer wants to read a second time, is a man for whom to give thanks.

GRAND RAPIDS HERALD—The book is well worth while for the stories are marked by skilful and virile portrayal and uncommon scenes.

Illustrated, decorative cloth, price \$1.50

## THE STORY OF MARTIN COE

*With illustrations by Howard Giles*

This strong novel has to do with the mishaps and final salvation of a deserter from the U. S. Navy. The salvation of the deserter is brought about by the love of a charming young woman, . . . the kind upon which ideals are built. The wholesome uplift of "The Story of Martin Coe" cannot be too strongly emphasized. The action of the plot is all-engrossing; there is not a superfluous passage in the book.

THE NEW YORK EVENING TELEGRAM—"A rattling story, told with dash and spirit and is wholly satisfying as a romance."

THE NEWARK EVENING NEWS—"The Story of Martin Coe" is a story capitably told. The author has to his credit that rarest of all achievements nowadays, something new in fiction. The book in its essence is an appeal to patriotism. The Americanism of the novel is sterling."

ALBANY (N. Y.) ARGUS—"As thrilling in its patriotism as Edward Everett Hale's masterpiece, and that is high praise indeed."

THE DENVER REPUBLICAN—"A man's story this, strong, clear cut, full of life and action, yet with a strain of sentiment that does not grow maudlin, of gentleness that remains manly, told about a man who capitulates to a woman's ideals, without losing his own."

Decorative cloth, price \$1.50



The Outing  
Publishing Company  
NEW YORK  
Main Offices and Publishing Plant at  
Deposit, N. Y.



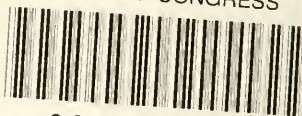




APR 8 1907



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 754 589 7 ●